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# The Dalcroze diamond: a theory of spiritual experiences in Dalcroze Eurhythmics

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study presents a theory of spiritual experiences in Dalcroze Eurhythmics generated from four qualitative research studies by the authors. Two of these are literature-based ('A conceptual model of spirituality in music education' and 'A conceptual study of spirituality in selected writings of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze') and two are based on lived experiences ('Exploring lived experiences of spirituality amongst five Dalcroze teachers' and 'Stories students tell about their lived experiences of spirituality in the Dalcroze class'). The theory is generated by concepts, constructs and propositions that emerged when the data from all four previous studies were revisited and coded for causality. Since the theory of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and spiritual experiences is multifaceted, we used a diamond as a metaphor to show our findings. We propose that if participation in Dalcroze practice can connect us to ourselves, others, the environment, the sacred (that which is made special, set apart, nurtured, loved, enjoyed, respected or considered important), or facilitate transcendent, holistic or transformative experiences, then spiritual experiences may occur. With this theory, we hope to create heightened awareness of the spiritual potential in the Dalcroze class and communicate the pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact that are required when teaching using the Dalcroze approach.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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## KEYWORDS

Spirituality; lived experiences; wellbeing; theory; concepts; constructs; propositions

## Introduction

This qualitative study presents a theory of spiritual experience in Dalcroze Eurhythmics generated from four qualitative research studies by the authors. Two of these are literature-based ('A conceptual model of spirituality in music education' and 'A conceptual study of spirituality in selected writings of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze') and two are based on lived experiences ('Exploring lived experiences of spirituality amongst five Dalcroze teachers' and 'Stories students tell about their lived experiences of spirituality in the Dalcroze class'). The themes and categories of these four previous studies are summarised in [Table 1](#).

There is little theory on spirituality in music education. Boyce-Tillman (2007) has developed a phenomenography of spirituality in musical experience, which expresses the relational nature of spirituality in four overlapping domains (materials, construction, expression and values). This has been followed by Van der Merwe and Habron (2015), whose hermeneutic phenomenological model of spirituality in music education analyses 22 primary sources to present a picture of how spirituality can be conceptualised. The model has been shown to be useful and adaptable when applied to a case, namely selected writings in English by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (Habron and Van der Merwe 2017). Here,

**Table 1.** Spiritual experiences through Dalcroze Eurhythmics in four previous studies.

Four studies	Relationality concepts	Spatiality concepts	Temporality concepts	Corporeality concepts	Core concepts
A conceptual model of spirituality in music education	Connection Inter / intrapersonal relationships Spiritual virtues and vices Meaning	Awareness Awe and wonder Transcendence Ecstasy Suprarationality	Journey Joy Flow Eternal	Embodiment Sensory experience Creativity Breath	<b>Holistic experience</b> <b>Sacred body, time, space and relationships</b>
A conceptual study of spirituality in selected writings of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze	Spiritual unity Give life	Freedom Transformation Sensibility	Rhythm	Expression Energy	<b>Balance</b> <b>Holistic experience</b> <b>Aesthetic experience</b> <b>Movement: time, space and energy</b> <b>Transformation</b>
Exploring lived experiences of spirituality amongst five Dalcroze teachers: An IPA	Awareness of self, other and environment Wellbeing	Transcending space	Growth and learning Transcending time		
Stories students tell about their lived experiences of spirituality in the Dalcroze class	Transcending self Playfulness Synchronization			Transcending body	<b>Interaction</b>

spirituality is described as holism, balance and aesthetic experience, which are afforded through moving in time and space, and with energy. Therefore, although Jaques-Dalcroze did not present a theory of spirituality for Dalcroze Eurhythmics, we generated a working conceptual model from an analysis of his selected writings in English (Habron and Van der Merwe 2017). Boyce-Tillman (2017) reviews the literature to arrive at eight interweaving strands in spirituality: metaphysical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergaian, extrapersonal/ethical, narrative and tradition. However, we are not aware of a theory of spiritual experiences in the field of Dalcroze studies.

Therefore, our purpose in this article is to describe and explain a data-based theory of spiritual experiences in Dalcroze Eurhythmics, which Jaques-Dalcroze envisioned as an holistic music education method or approach (Habron 2014) and which studies show can also lead to personal transformation (Frego 2009), social integration and wellbeing (Van der Merwe 2015). Dalcroze Eurhythmics has been defined as a 'bodily way of being in the sound' (Juntunen 2004, 68), where 'one can become the music' (Greenhead 2016, no page). Through Dalcroze Eurhythmics there is a relationship between the experienced (person) and the experiencer (music). In this sense, we agree with Boyce-Tillman (2007) that spirituality can be approached through the experiencer, the person. Our article responds to the research question: What theory describes and explains spiritual experiences in Dalcroze contexts? The desire for theory rests in its potential as an aid to practice. As Westerlund and Väkevä (2011) note, 'theoretical work may help us to detect new possibilities in our practice, thus helping us to make more of what we have already achieved' (39).

Over recent years, spirituality has become more visible within the social sciences and humanities (Williamson 2010; MacKian 2012). This is reflected within the performing arts by the appearance of monographs (such as Cobussen 2008), journals (such as *The Journal of Dance, Movement and Spiritualities*, established 2014) and edited collections, (such as Williamson et al. 2014; Boyce-Tillman 2017). The use of the plural in some of these titles indicates the importance of openness to a range of spiritual experiences and a multiplicity of views within this field. Furthermore, we acknowledge that by speaking of 'spirituality' there is a danger of reification, whereas our interest is in the idiographic nature of spiritual experiences.

In 2010, a group of music educators founded the Spirituality and Music Education (SAME) network, which has organised several international conferences and symposia, attracting scholars and practitioners in the related fields of ethnomusicology, music therapy and theology.<sup>1</sup> The

fourth conference (London, 2017), which combined with the fourth Nordoff-Robbins Plus conference, will be followed by a special issue of *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy* (Tsiris and Ansdell [forthcoming](#)). The appearance of spirituality in such contexts recognises it as an aspect of the multi-dimensions of human wellbeing. Furthermore, spirituality is recognised in music curriculum documents and policies across the globe as a facet of human experience (Department for Education 2011; Department of Basic Education 2011; NAFME 2011). Therefore, this research may be relevant not only to Dalcroze practitioners and students, but also to music educators more widely, policymakers in music education and researchers in several fields.

## Procedures

This is a theory-building qualitative study consisting of the culmination of four consecutive qualitative studies (Table 1). The first two studies (Van der Merwe and Habron 2015; Habron and Van der Merwe 2017) were document analyses and resulted in conceptual studies. In the second two studies (Van der Merwe and Habron 2018; Habron and Van der Merwe [Forthcoming](#)) the data were the lived experiences of Dalcroze students and teachers. The two strategies of inquiry for the latter were an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and a narrative inquiry. The data of these four studies were analysed in four heuristic units in ATLAS.ti. In the fifth phase of this Dalcroze and spirituality project we want to move from the conceptual level to the theoretical level.

According to Saldaña (2015) a theory is a general statement with causal relationships that explains how or why something happens. Furthermore, a theory provides insights for improving social life. With this theory of Dalcroze and spiritual experiences we first want to describe what it is like to have a spiritual experience in the Dalcroze class. Second, we want to explain why a spiritual experience takes place in the Dalcroze class, thereby providing insights into how opportunities can be created for these experiences and how practitioners and students can make sense of their experiences.

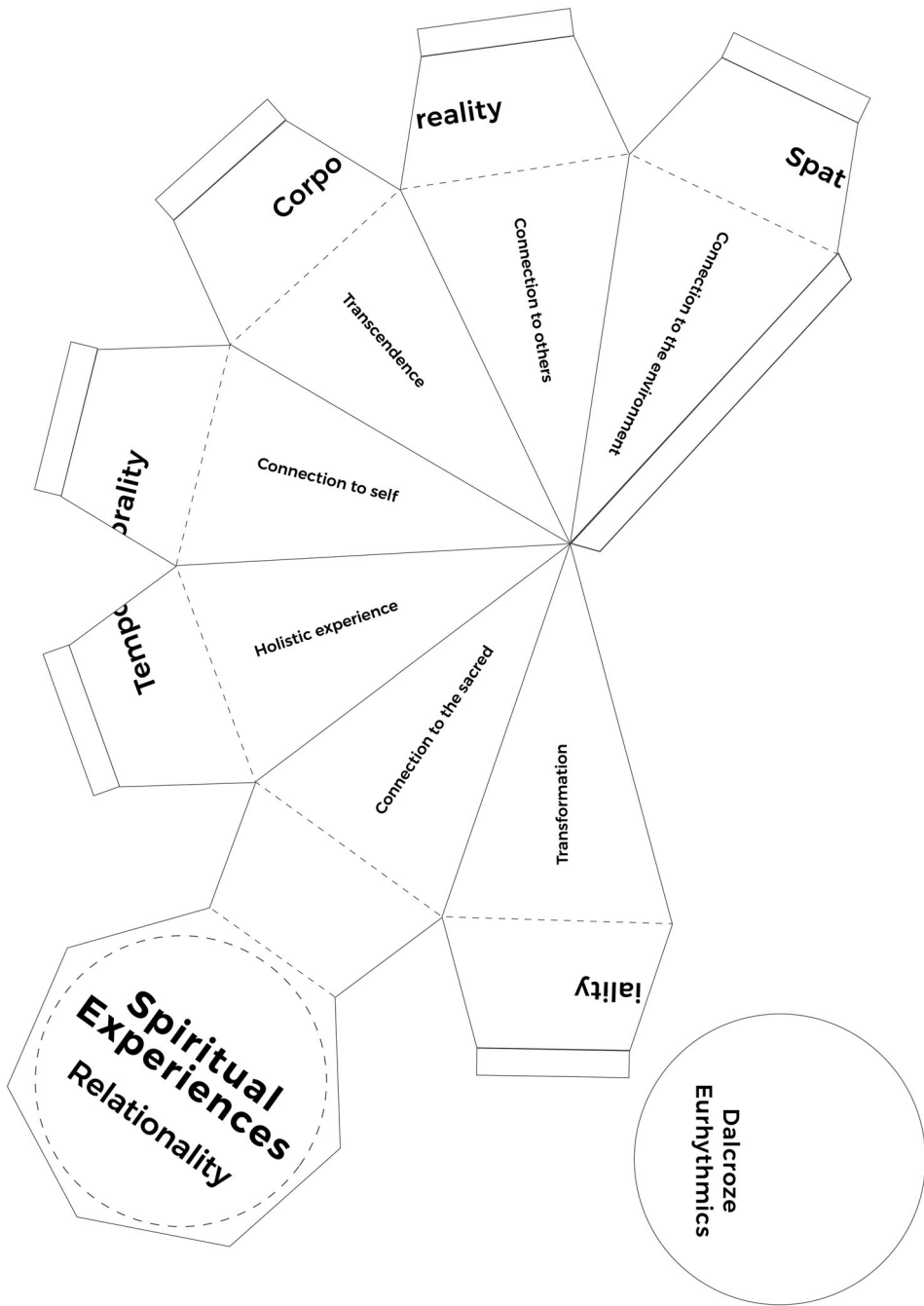
To build a theory of Dalcroze and spiritual experiences we needed concepts, constructs and propositions (Anfara and Mertz 2015). The data-based concepts, themes and categories from all four previous studies, that is the descriptions (Gelso 2006) of the spiritual experience, were very clear and are listed in Table 1. The four constructs (Table 1) throughout all four studies were ‘the basic things about our lifeworld (such as the experience of lived time, lived space, lived body and lived human relations)’ (Van Manen 1997, 39). These helped us to categorise the concepts and will also serve as the constructs in the Dalcroze diamond (Figures 1 and 2).

To derive the propositions we revisited the four heuristic units in ATLAS.ti and coded the core concepts (Table 1) for causality relationships so that we could explain why (Gelso 2006) Dalcroze may lead to spiritual experiences. Therefore, the data for this article consists of 22 academic articles, the three major collections of Jaques-Dalcroze’s writings available in English, the experiences of five Dalcroze teachers (Anna, Rose, Ethan, Henry and Emily) and the stories of seven Dalcroze students (Leslie, Helene, Molly, Ella, Lucy, Lucas and Iris).<sup>2</sup> From these four studies the core concepts of the previous studies (Table 1) were merged into seven core concepts (Table 2).

To achieve the integrative function (Gelso 2006) of our theory we placed these seven concepts (transcendence, holistic experiences, transformation and connection to self, connection to others, connection to the environment and connection to the sacred) and four constructs (lived body, space, time and relationships) in relation to each other to illustrate our seven propositions (Figure 1).

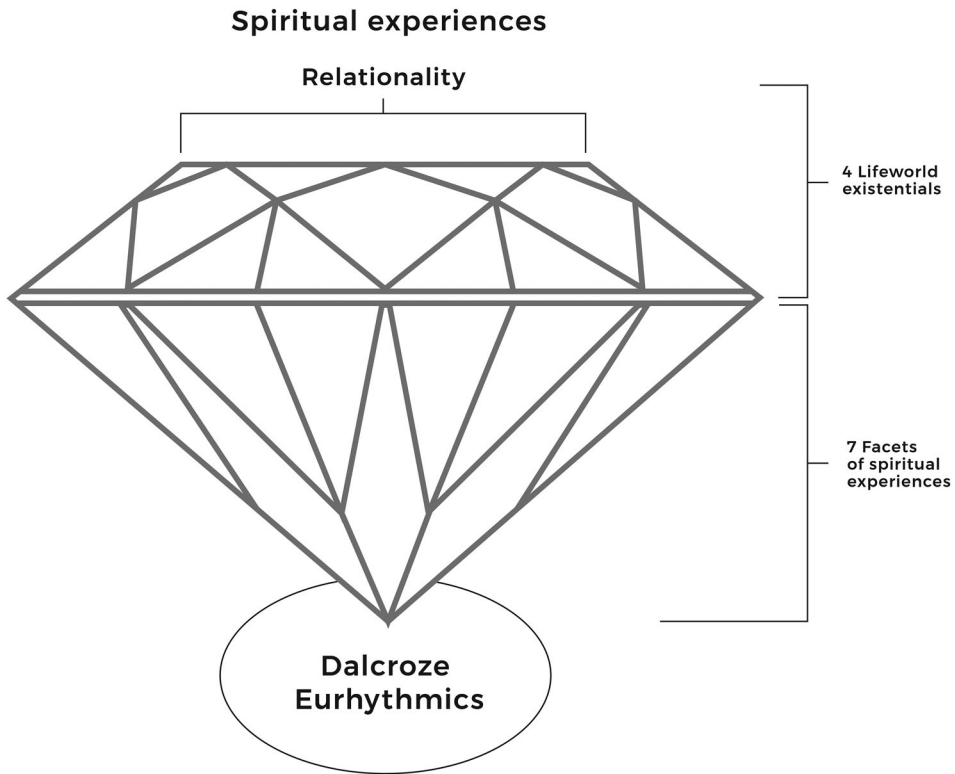
## Findings: the Dalcroze diamond

Participation in the Dalcroze class leads to awareness of self, other and environment, which in turn facilitates several types of connection. These connections are reflected in the seven propositions of the theory (Table 2), which can be expressed more fully as follows.



**Figure 1.** The Dalcroze diamond: A theory of spiritual experiences in Dalcroze Eurhythmics (cut-out template).

- (1). If Dalcroze connects us with the sacred, then it can lead to spiritual experiences.
- (2). If Dalcroze connects us with other people, then it can lead to spiritual experiences.
- (3). If Dalcroze helps us to understand ourselves better, then it can lead to spiritual experiences.
- (4). If Dalcroze helps us to connect with our environment, then it can lead to spiritual experiences.
- (5). If Dalcroze can facilitate a transcendent experience, then it can lead to spiritual experiences.



**Figure 2.** The Dalcroze diamond: A theory of spiritual experiences in Dalcroze Eurhythmics (sideways view).

**Table 2.** Concepts, constructs and propositions of the Dalcroze diamond.

Concepts used to describe spiritual experiences	Relationality	Spatiality	Temporality	Corporeality	Seven core concepts that were coded for causality to create the propositions
	Connection	Awareness	Journey	Embodiment	(1) Connection to the sacred (2) Connection to others (3) Connection to self (4) Connection to the environment (5) Transcendence (6) Holistic experiences (7) Transformation
	Inter / intrapersonal relationships	Awe and wonder	Joy	Sensory experience	
	Spiritual virtues and vices	Ecstasis	Flow	Creativity	
	Meaning	Supra-rationality	Eternal	Breath	
	Spiritual unity	Freedom	Rhythm	Expression	
	Give life	Sensibility	Growth and learning	Energy	
	Awareness of self, other and environment				
	Wellbeing				
	Playfulness				
	Synchronization				

- (6). If Dalcroze can bring everything together and give us holistic experiences, then it can lead to spiritual experiences.
- (7). If Dalcroze can help us to transform, then it can lead to spiritual experiences.

We chose to represent our theory using a diamond (Figure 1). This has several meanings pertinent to our study. First, as a precious stone, the diamond represents something of great worth and value. Our data have shown that spiritual experiences are often defined as something special, valued,

set apart (Zinnbauer and Pargament 2005; Williamson 2010; Yob 2011). Second, the diamond is multifaceted, which allows us to present a range of concepts and constructs that are interconnected and part of a whole. Whilst theoretical propositions normally take the form ‘if ... , then ... ’, we wanted to avoid a picture that presented spiritual experiences in a linear fashion.

Third, the diamond image also relates to the qualitative validation strategy of crystallization (Richardson 1994; Ellingson 2009). ‘What we see depends on our angle of repose’ (Richardson 1994, 522). Ellingson’s (2009, 23–24) five principles of crystallization are prevalent in our research:

- (1). Through the previous four studies we ‘offer deep, thickly described, complexly rendered interpretations of meanings’ (23) about the phenomenon Dalcroze and spirituality.
- (2). Through using multiple strategies of inquiries: document analysis, IPA and narrative inquiry we ‘represent ways of producing knowledge across multiple points of the qualitative continuum’ (23).
- (3). We utilised ‘more than one genre of writing’ (23) since we used vignettes in Van der Merwe and Habron (2015) and I poems in the article with the Dalcroze teachers (Van der Merwe and Habron 2018).
- (4). We also included ‘a significant degree of reflexive consideration’ (24) of our own roles. We shared our own experiences in the first article (Van der Merwe and Habron 2015) and we were participants in the Dalcroze students study (Habron and Van der Merwe Forthcoming).
- (5). We embrace the notion that knowledge is ‘situated, partial, constructed, multiple, embodied, and enmeshed in power relations’ (24) as is reflected in our use of a diamond to represent a theory of spiritual experiences in Dalcroze Eurhythmics.

Last, the diamond reminds us of the catalytic action that transforms coal to diamond, a thoroughly grounded and extremely hard material, formed over a long time through transformative action. This reflects our data, in which spiritual experiences in Dalcroze contexts are bodily and sensory, including challenging learning journeys over many years.

We have developed a 3D representation of the diamond and present it as a template which can be cut out, decorated and assembled (Figure 1). Inviting readers to engage actively with our theory in this way connects to the notion of Dalcroze pedagogy as being enactive and experiential, requiring embodied, aesthetic responses. Figure 2 presents a sideways view of the diamond and clarifies that it rests on Dalcroze Eurhythmics as a base, as this is the context for our study. Dalcroze practice is described in more detail below. Finally, Photos 1 and 2 show the model when built.

The diamond presents a theory that reflects the differences we found in the data and welcomes a multiplicity of views. It allows for varied perspectives on understanding spiritual experiences in Dalcroze contexts. For example, whilst ‘sacred’ was a core concept in our first study, it did not feature in Jaques-Dalcroze’s writings, except in passing. On the other hand, certain themes were prevalent across all four studies. The most prevalent, as can be seen in Table 1, was relationality. It is relationality that connects Dalcroze and spiritual experiences since Dalcroze is a relational practice (Le College de l’institut Jaques-Dalcroze 2009) and spirituality is relational (Faver 2004). Hence, we place relationality with ‘Spiritual experiences’ at the top of the diamond.

## Discussion: description and explanation of the core concepts

### *Dalcroze Eurhythmics*

Dalcroze Eurhythmics, the base on which the diamond rests, is an experiential way of learning through music and movement. It originated in the hands of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865–1950), a Viennese-born composer, pianist, conductor and educator. Having begun as a response to educational practices in European conservatoire tuition at the end of the nineteenth century, his method



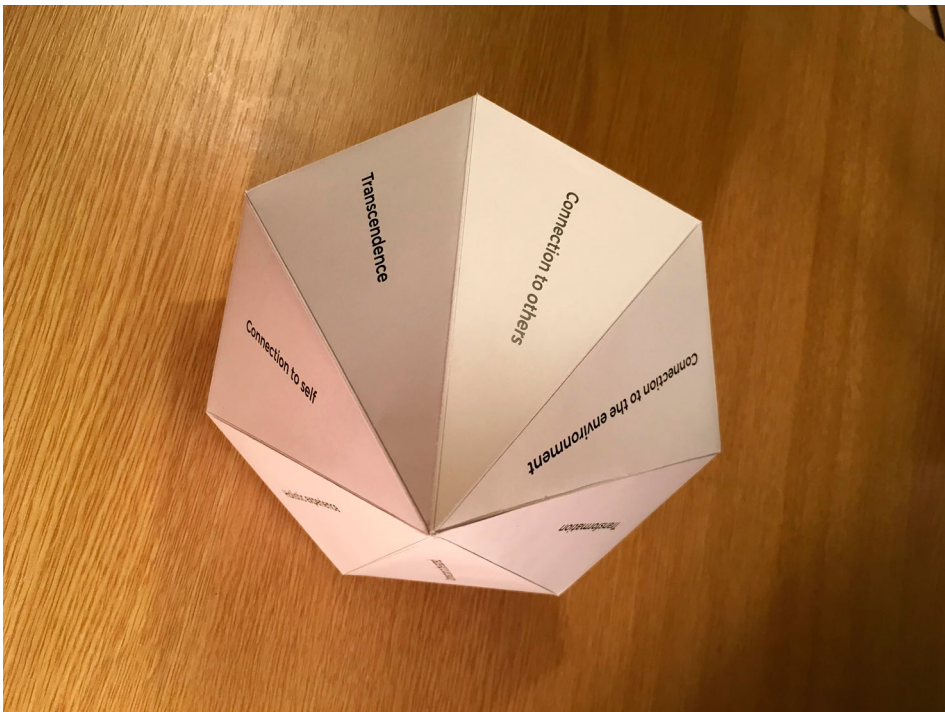


**Photos 1.** The Dalcroze diamond: A theory of spiritual experiences in Dalcroze Eurhythmics (showing the Dalcroze diamond, when constructed).

also became an approach to general education (Bachmann 2015) and wellbeing through music (Habron 2014). Through his collaborative work and successive generations of practitioners, Dalcroze practice spread worldwide and continues to develop (FIER 2017), connecting with various other disciplines in the arts and humanities, and social and health sciences (Del Bianco, Morgeneegg, and Nicolet 2017; Habron and Mathieu 2017).

Dalcroze Eurhythmics centres on movement-music relationships as means for learning and refining artistic, musical skills (such as rhythmic, expressive performance, aural acuity, creativity and ensemble awareness) and a range of related skills (social, such as collaboration; physical, such as ease of movement and somatic awareness; and cognitive, such as observation and memory). It is an embodied approach to music education, supported by contemporary theory in neuroscience (Altenmüller and Scholz 2016) and movement studies (Greenhead and Habron 2015), and has various preventative, therapeutic and rehabilitative applications in music therapy and healthcare (Habron 2016).





**Photos 2.** The Dalcroze diamond: A theory of spiritual experiences in Dalcroze Eurhythmics (showing the Dalcroze diamond, when constructed).

Typically, Dalcroze pedagogy takes place in groups, in an open space, with the practitioner using piano improvisation to elicit, support and respond to movement. At all times, students connect their movements to listening, whether to live or recorded music, imagined music, an internal pulse or some other bodily sensation. Integral to the practice are individual and group work, singing and vocalisation, improvisation (musically and in movement), conducting of various sorts and the use of equipment (balls, hoops, sticks, scarves) to show how music moves or feels. Through these means students explore a wide range of musical phenomena and repertoires, with the aim of drawing on their embodied knowledge in their chosen fields, such as performance (Greenhead 2017), composition (Habron, Jesuthasan, and Bourne 2012) or conducting (Daley 2013).

Dalcroze teachers aim to afford students aesthetic, sensory experience before verbalisation and intellectual reflection. Through exploring time–space–energy relationships (such as how to perform the same movement in different durations) in a music–movement context, students have the opportunity to ‘be’ music. These elements – aesthetic experience, movement and time–space–energy relationships – were core concepts in our second study (A conceptual study of spirituality in selected writings of Émile Jaques-Dalcroze) and are subsumed in the diamond’s base: Dalcroze Eurhythmics. The seven core concepts which make up our propositions are facets of the diamond itself and now follow.

#### (1). Connection to the sacred

All seven of our propositions relate to the interaction between Dalcroze and spiritual experiences (Figure 1). Spirituality has been defined as being connected to the sacred (Walsh 2000; Kraus 2009; Williamson 2010). ‘That which is most central and essential to our lives’ (Walsh 2000, 3) can be called sacred. In other words, if something or someone is made special, set apart, nurtured, loved,

enjoyed, respected or considered important, then it is sacred (Zinnbauer and Pargament 2005; Williamson 2010; Yob 2011). The sacred can also be a manifestation of the divine (Debenham and Debenham 2008). In the scholarly literature many avenues to the sacred are described. Knowing the truth about oneself and the world can lead to a sacred experience (Bogdan 2003). Jaques-Dalcroze (1930, 160) said that his approach could give a person knowledge of life and he quotes da Vinci: 'love is born of knowledge' (Jaques-Dalcroze 1921, 163). If one realises the worth of life or is filled with love or compassion, then it also brings one closer to the sacred (Debenham and Debenham 2008). One of the Dalcroze teachers, Anna, described this connection between people in the Dalcroze class as holy and one of the Dalcroze students, Lucas, also called these moments of connection between people sacred.

The body plays an important role in these sacred experiences and moving can even be an act of devotion to the sacred (Debenham and Debenham 2008). When the physical and spiritual are united, a sacred wholeness is experienced (Debenham and Debenham 2008). Jaques-Dalcroze (1930, 6, 10, 102) often advocates that an education through rhythm animates and unites mind, body and soul. Teaching the whole student allows transformative learning to take place (Debenham and Debenham 2008). Such transformations were experienced by all the participants in the previous two studies (Van der Merwe and Habron 2018; Habron and Van der Merwe *Forthcoming*). Emily noticed how all her relationships transformed after she started learning through Dalcroze. One of the Dalcroze students, Ella, noticed the transformation in how she now experiences music in nature.

For sacred experiences to occur in an educational context the atmosphere has to be relaxed and comfortable (Boyce-Tillman 2000). Jaques-Dalcroze (1930, 100) states that 'Games should be joy-giving; I look upon joy as the most powerful of all mental stimuli.' Deep play can allow sacred altered states to happen (Palmer 2010). One of the Dalcroze students, Leslie, remembers how in one class he felt like flying and experienced a connection to something greater than himself. A Dalcroze teacher, Ethan, also had a transcendent experience where he experienced the space widening.

## (2). Connection to others

Not only connection to the sacred but also connection to others through Dalcroze practice can facilitate spiritual experiences. Interconnectedness is a central aspect of spirituality (Grise-Owens 2011). This view was supported in all four of the previous studies since connection to others, interaction and interpersonal relationships emerged as very prominent themes. According to Bogdan (2010), the community and relationship between self and others that music educators strive for 'has the potential to change the world, one molecule at a time' (124). Jaques-Dalcroze ([1921] 1967) advocates that rhythm has to ability to unite people and to bring them in harmony with each other. Ella clarifies why this might be the case: 'the space that we created for each other was just really kind of mutually respectful and supportive and we had fun and working on an activity like that together, it's just such an intense experience.' Emily believes that Dalcroze can help us to work together in a way that will be good for generations to come.

So I think we're, you know, as the world, we have to address issues of working together, peacefully, and in a way that's going to be healthy for our grandchildren's grandchildren. And until that happens, can Dalcroze help with that? Yes, I think so.

For Lucy, a mirroring exercise in a Dalcroze class was a special moment of meeting the other: 'There's eye contact and there's a way of wanting to really meet their whole body ... you're really having to observe closely what they're doing. And that's a kind of interaction you just don't have in normal life.' Not only does Dalcroze help us to connect with others, but one can also get to know oneself better as Anna explains: 'you see yourself and you see yourself in the eyes of the other, the reflection of the other.' Tacey (2003, 156) says that 'The self can only come to know itself in relationship with an other.'

### (3). Connection to self

The scholarly literature is unanimous about the individual nature of spiritual experiences (Debenham and Debenham 2008; Bogdan 2010; Carr 2010; Williamson 2010; Yob 2010; Grise-Owens 2011). We agree with Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005, 30) that ‘Universalist assumptions about the religiousness or spirituality of all people obscure important variations in the belief and practice of some people.’ Inner experiences are central to art and the sacred (Debenham and Debenham 2008). Iris explains that ‘when you’re focused inwardly you have more a chance for’ a spiritual experience. Jaques-Dalcroze ([1921] 1967) emphasised that the underlying principle of his whole approach to education is that individuals must first know themselves. Eurhythmics allows the expression of individuality (Jaques-Dalcroze, [1921] 1967). Ethan becomes more aware of his own problematic habits and adjusts and develops personally through using Dalcroze principles. Leslie says ‘my own somatic awareness now is in a different universe compared to what it was before I did Dalcroze.’ Not only does Dalcroze deepen our understanding of ourselves and help us to develop, but it also connects us to our environments.

### (4). Connection to the environment

If Dalcroze Eurhythmics can make us aware of, and connect to, our environment, then we can have spiritual experiences (Figure 1). Debenham and Debenham (2008) describe this connection with everything in the universe as sacred. Jaques-Dalcroze ([1921] 1967) believes that music can connect the individual with the universe. Similarly, Boyce-Tillman (2007) found that music connects the experienter with ‘other beings, people, the cosmos’ (1413). Both the Dalcroze teachers and Dalcroze students in our previous studies say the Dalcroze approach connects them with their environments. Anna sometimes uses pictures of trees in her Dalcroze teaching. ‘When I pass a tree, I can see emotion in that tree.’ Emily feels that through her Dalcroze practice she developed a great sense of presence and experience ‘that profundity, being part of the great turning.’ Ella tells a story of a Dalcroze lesson where the group had ‘gone to the cathedral [to prepare for an activity], we had all taken pictures of it, we have all gotten that feeling of that space so ... we were able then to work in a very, very earthy kind of way.’ For Lucy, an experience teaching Dalcroze outside brought about ‘integration of music and, kind of, that earthy connection with nature. It really felt like it was bringing another dimension to the class.’ Transcending time or space can also be considered sacred experiences (Williamson 2010).

### (5). Transcendence

Boyce-Tillman (2007, 1410) defines spirituality as ‘the ability to transport the experienter to a different time/space dimension – to move them from everyday reality to a world other than the commonplace.’ In other words, spirituality has the potential to be transcendent. Jaques-Dalcroze (1917) suggests that we must help ‘the young to know themselves and to rise above themselves’ (34). He suggests that ‘the more automatism possessed by our body, the more our soul will rise above material things’ (Jaques-Dalcroze, [1921] 1967, 61). Dalcroze teachers and students in the previous studies transcended body, time, space and themselves.

Leslie and Helene told stories of experiences in the Dalcroze class where they felt like flying. Rose says ‘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.’ Transcending time happens when ‘there is flow and we are just happening and we are in the music and in the moment and we are enjoying working together’ (Anna). Henry had experiences of transcending space. The teacher invited them to lie on the floor and said I am playing music and when it expands you expand and when it diminishes you diminish. Henry remembered: ‘you also diminish in space ... and it was really an immense space, for me. After that lesson, I decided to study Dalcroze.’ Ethan says ‘when the affection finally explodes you will feel the space become wide.’ This sense of expansion is echoed in Lucy’s story: ‘suddenly, that kind of musical environment created a huge expanse, sort of, sensation and that that could then really

give me the chance to hear something much more subtle.’ In Molly’s case, the Dalcroze class reminded her of a transcendent experience of looking at art:

It’s that sense of entry into the art, where you stop standing and looking at it, but you’re actually in it. And so that experience with that [Dalcroze class] ... was a day of being completely absorbed in the music without commenting on it from, kind of, a distance or an objective, oh, this is what’s happening to me now, sort of thing.

Jaques-Dalcroze ([1921] 1967) says transcendence becomes possible when ‘the child feels himself delivered from all physical embarrassment and mental obsession of a lower order’ (98). Lucas only had spiritual experiences when he forgot about himself and Ella also had transcendent experiences when she could get out of her head into her body. This harmonising of body and mind leads to joyful holistic experiences (Jaques-Dalcroze 1930, 6).

#### (6). Holistic

In the Dalcroze class the emotions, body, mind, senses and music become one holistic experience (Juntunen and Westerlund 2001). This balancing of polarities through music and the body is seen by many as the Ultimate Wisdom (Boyce-Tillman 2000) and congruence between different domains can provide an encounter with the spiritual (Boyce-Tillman 2007). Yob (2010) goes as far to say that if we have a body, mind and soul, then the spirit is in the classroom whether we acknowledge it or not. Jaques-Dalcroze ([1921] 1967) believes that it is through the study of rhythm, through movement in time and space, that the whole organism is brought into balance. This is why Rose loves teaching and practising Dalcroze because ‘It feels like a complete experience not just one bit of me.’ For Molly, learning through Dalcroze Eurhythmics is an holistic experience, a ‘kind of immersion for me, on a physical, and an intellectual, and an emotional, and a spiritual level.’ Ella and Helene like the fact that they can incorporate Dalcroze into all aspects of their lives as mothers, teachers, researchers and performers; it brings everything together. Similarly, learning through Dalcroze ‘was knitting things together’ for Lucy. Leslie also acknowledges that Dalcroze clarifies his professional identity and allows him to look at music in a more holistic way. In each case, these holistic experiences led to transformation.

#### (7). Transformation

Boyce-Tillman (2007) describes one of the aspects of a spiritual experience ‘a sense of transformation, change’ (1413). Wonder (Debenham and Debenham 2008), the joy of dance (Levitz 2001), teaching the whole student (Debenham and Debenham) and ‘shiver-factor’ experiences (Bogdan 2010, 119) can bring about transformation or give one access to transformational experiences. However, transformation is not only associated with positive experiences, but also with difficult and challenging growth experiences as many of the Dalcroze teachers and students testify. Rose explains that

many people can have a honeymoon period when in Dalcroze ... at a certain time after regular training there comes a dip where people have to make a choice of walking away or walking on ... if the work is gonna have some profound effect, a transformative effect on the person, then at some point it [personal characteristics] needs adjusting ... which you know is going to be costly to yourself.

Emily experienced being out of her comfort zone in Dalcroze training. Leslie found it difficult being expected to do things with limited training; however, he remembers a transformative Dalcroze Summer school: ‘the week was very moving, when I think back it was very enlightening on a sort of musical level and pedagogical level, but it was very moving on a personal level.’ Jaques-Dalcroze (1917) claims ‘that the study of Rhythmic Gymnastics little by little transforms the outlook and develops the individual character’ (34).<sup>3</sup>

### **Implications for practice and research**

Dalcroze Eurhythmics is a relational practice. Based on the weaving together of music and movement, it connects learners with each other, themselves, their environment and the sacred. In present-ing spirituality as a primarily relational phenomenon (Faver 2004), our theory highlights the

potential for spiritual experience in the Dalcroze class. However, we do not claim that this potential is unique to the Dalcroze approach. Such opportunities for spiritual experience imply an awareness on behalf of practitioners and teacher educators within the Dalcroze community. Both in terms of pedagogical content knowledge (such as how Dalcroze lessons are structured and the types of exercises created) and pedagogy as an ethics of care (how students are attended to and treated as persons), this theory affords a means for teachers to reflect on their practice, a skill which is regarded as essential for music educators (De Baets and Buchborn 2014). This may in turn lead to the development or enhancement of ‘pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact’, which for Van Manen (2015, 100) ‘depend on the cultivated ability to perceive and listen to young people’ (101). We would add the ability to perceive and listen to the students’ whole selves, including their challenging, transformative experiences.

We offer this theory of spirituality in Dalcroze Eurhythmics as something to be tested and modified. According to Gelso (2006), theories should have testability. Therefore, we present the theory as a thinking tool for researchers, who may wish to apply it afresh within Dalcroze studies and other music education, or music and movement, contexts. Given that it relies partly on experiences considered phenomenologically and partly on historical writings as data, our theory may also have currency in the fields of the philosophy and history of music education.

Spirituality, as an aspect of human experience, is reflected in various holistic models of wellbeing. Within positive psychology, spirituality is part of the notion of flourishing and seen as a signature strength (Seligman 2011). In the recently developed performance enhancement framework of the Healthy Conservatoires Network, the spiritual is one of eight aspects of student wellbeing along with the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, environmental, financial and occupational (Williamson 2017). Therefore, this theory may also prove useful not only to Dalcroze teachers, but also to practitioners in music education more broadly and in other practices that combine music and movement, as a means to develop spiritual wellbeing within and without the classroom, and to understand holistically the experiences of teachers and students.

## Notes

1. SAME is also a Special Interest Group (SIG) within the International Society of Music Education.
2. The teachers and students were female and male, and came from Africa, Asia, Europe and North America. The teachers were qualified at different levels (Certificate, Licence and Diplôme Supérieur) and the students had between 5 and 13 years of engagement in Dalcroze training.
3. Rhythmic Gymnastics was an earlier term for what became known as Dalcroze Eurhythmics. See Habron (2016) for more detail.

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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