THE JAQUES-DALCROZE

METHOD OF EURHYTHMICS.

RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT

VOL. I.

Development of the Rhythmic and Metric Sense
of the Instinct for Harmonious and Balanced Movements,
and of Good Motor Habits.

BY

EMILE JAQUES-DALCROZE.

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PREFACE

EURHYTHMICS is essentially a matter of personal experience. When asked what it is and to what it leads it is easy for me to explain how I conceived the idea, to quote the actual results, to demonstrate some of the exercises, but the real answer is only to be obtained by actual experience of the Method. A scientist may describe to you the theoretical and practical application of electricity, or of radium, but that does not explain what these two great forces are. You may read all the histories of religion which have ever been written and yet not experience religious faith.

In evolving the educational system of Eurhythmics some twelve years ago I certainly did not realise the great influence that this new system would have in restoring man to knowledge of himself—of this I shall speak later. I thought only of making my pupils better musicians. From the outset of my career as Professor of Harmony at the Geneva Conservatoire I found that for nine-tenths of my pupils harmony was merely a question of mathematics, that they could not hear the chords they wrote down and therefore were unable to appreciate music to the full extent. Music is not purely intellectual; it works through the senses—it sets our whole organism in vibration. If this organism is incapable of responding in all its parts, the brain will register incomplete sensations. At the time of which I am speaking I was thinking more particularly of the sense of hearing, and it seemed to me necessary to train the ears of my pupils, to teach them the practice of the art before embarking on the theoretical side.

The exercises in ear-training which I gave to adults were attended with such success that I determined to make the same experiment with children. I was sure that with them the success would be still greater, for children approach a new subject with an open mind, unencumbered with that analytical reasoning which is so fatal to the development of individuality. I therefore started classes for small children, and found out at once that the development of their hearing alone was not enough to make them feel and love music; that in music the most forceful element, the one most closely allied to life and with the greatest appeal to the senses, is rhythm.

There are three elements in music: sound, rhythm, and dynamics. Of these three elements the two last depend entirely on movement and find their counterpart in our muscular system. Changes of tempo (*allegro*, *andante*, *accelerando*, *ritenuto*), variations of force (*forte*, *piano*, *crescendo*, *diminuendo*), can be expressed by the body, and the intensity of our musical feelings depends on the intensity of our physical sensations.

It seemed to me that a system in which the muscles are trained to contract and relax rhythmically must result in strengthening the metric and rhythmic instincts; so I invented some exercises in marching, arm-movements, and movements of the body for my little pupils, to be carried out in time to and in accordance with the nuances of the music, and was convinced that this would teach them to become rhythmical. But now my difficulties began. During the first lessons I found that the children, even those most gifted from the physical and intellectual standpoints, did not all respond in the same way. Some responded too slowly, some too quickly to the word of command; some who were able to carry out an exercise with ease in a certain tempo were unable to change to another quickly, however much they wished to do so; others again could begin an exercise perfectly, but were not capable of sustained effort. Judging from my observations, I saw that it was not enough to grasp a rhythm mentally and to have the necessary muscular equipment to carry it out; it was also necessary, in order to insure a good interpretation, to establish a close relation between the thought and the action.

This relation depends on the condition of the nervous system. It is unfortunately rare nowadays for our faculties to be equally balanced, and for mind and body to be in complete harmony. The relation between the faculties which conceive an idea and those which carry it out is often weak owing to the lack of orientation in the nerve impulses, or to a resistance in certain muscles caused by slowness of mental action. It is the consciousness of this continual struggle to make our muscles respond, and of a weakness in our nervous system, which causes mental confusion, lack of confidence in one's own powers, fear of oneself. This general state of uneasiness also results in lack of power of concentration. The brain is a prey to incessant demands which prevent it from working calmly, from carrying out its orders, and from controlling the body with the necessary confidence and deliberation.

The more ordered our life is, the freer we feel. The more words we have in our vocabulary, the richer our thought will be. If we can teach our bodies to work automatically, our minds will have more time and freedom for higher things. If we are obliged always to be thinking of our bodies we must perforce lose some of our liberty of mind. Without doubt the majority of mankind are the slaves of their bodies, prisoners in matter, and, contrary to what is generally believed, the over-cultivation of intellectualism, of analytical studies and of specialized psychology, tends rather to trouble and disturb the mind than to render it lucid and calm.

Many parents and teachers are at pains to prevent children from seeing anything which suggests the classic human form, or from learning anything of the anatomy of the human body which would lead to a liberal appreciation of movement. This has not the desired result of keeping them pure-minded, but inclines rather to the opposite. My pupils have often told me of the horror of some people at hearing that we carry out our exercises with bare feet and legs. These people assert that this is liable to arouse evil thoughts. There is only one answer to such accusations: namely, that to the pure all things are pure, and that if anyone is shocked at the sight of a naked leg it is his unhealthiness of mind which is to be deplored. An acquaintance with the human body will never trouble the minds of children who have been brought up in a healthy and natural way.

Our system is based on marching, and therefore the muscles of the foot and leg must be accorded as much freedom as possible. No doctor will disagree with this statement, nor, I trust, will anyone who respects the laws of hygiene. Pianists will agree with me that they could not acquire a good technique of their instrument by practising in gloves.

We have two ends in view with our exercises: firstly to create numerous automatic actions and to insure a complete muscular response, and secondly to establish a sure relation between mind and body. One of the first results of these exercises is to teach the child to know and to control himself. Knowing something about the marvellous mechanism of the body—that body which was given us not to be despised but to be made a fit dwelling-place for the soul—knowing also that he is able to carry out with ease movements suggested by others or willed by himself, the child develops the desire to make use of the many forces at his disposal, and as a natural result of his mind being freed from physical restraint, his imagination develops.

Our organs are developed by use; our mental powers are developed by conscious control of the body. As we become freed from physical restraint and from the more elementary forms of mental preoccupation we experience a sense of joy. This joy is a new factor in moral progress, a new stimulant to the will.

All the exercises of Eurhythmics aim at strengthening the power of concentration, at keeping the body under control while awaiting orders from the intellect, at turning conscious action into subconscious, and at deliberately training and developing the subconscious faculties. Further, these exercises tend to create more motive habits, new reflexes, to obtain the greatest result with the least effort, and so to tranquillise the spirit, to strengthen the will, and to establish order and clarity in the organism.

The whole method is based on the principle that theory must follow practice, that rules must not be taught to children until they have themselves experienced the facts that gave rise to the rules, and that the first thing one must teach them is to know themselves. The opinions and conclusions of others should not be taught them until later. Before sowing the seed the ground must be prepared. This is not done either in schools or in conservatoires. As far as music is concerned, tools are put into the hands of the children before they know what to do with them. They are taught the pianoforte before they are musicians, *i.e.*, before they can hear sounds or feel rhythm, before their whole organism is able to vibrate in response to artistic emotions.

The aim of my teaching is to make my pupils able to say at the end of their studies, not "I know" but "I feel," and also to create in them the desire to express themselves; for when an emotion is strongly felt there is an immediate desire to communicate it to others to the best of one's ability. The more life we possess the more we shall be able to spread life around us. To receive, to give, that is the great law of humanity.

I base my whole system on music because music is an important psychic force springing from the emotional and spiritual centres which by its power of stimulation and control is able to influence all our vital activities. It is able more than all the other arts to express the varied nuances of our feelings. Everyone must have music in himself, and by music I mean what the

Greeks meant, *i.e.*, the ensemble of the faculties of our senses and of our spirit, the ever-changing symphony of feelings created spontaneously, transformed by the imagination, regulated by rhythm, harmonized by consciousness. This music constitutes the personality of the individual, and I hold that an education having for its aim the desire to establish intimate relations between the conscious and the sub-conscious, to stimulate and organize our feelings and sensations, must develop our individual character.

I said before that Eurhythmics—on whatever lines it is taught—is more than a pedagogic method. It is indeed a force—analogous to electricity or to the great chemical and physical forces of Nature—which has the power of restoring us to a knowledge of ourselves, of making us aware not only of our own forces but also of those of others—the forces of humanity. It compels us to a knowledge of the unfathomable depths of our enigmatic and ever-changing being; it inspires us with a prescience of the secret of that eternal mystery which has governed the life of mankind throughout the centuries; it gives to our mind a character of primitive religiousness which elevates it and unites in it past, present, and future. And therefore it seems to me that it has the mission of creating in a still far distant future closer relations between body and spirit, of unifying the moral and physical forces of the individual, and of regulating the relations of man to man on a surer basis.

I think no artist who has thought and observed will deny that a conscientious study of rhythm in all its forms tends to a more lively understanding of art. Art is made up equally of imagination, thought, and emotion. Thought tempers and gives style to the imagination. Imagination animates and vivifies style, and emotion ennobles and renders sensitive the products of thought and imagination.

It may be questioned by some whether it is really worth while to familiarise thousands of young people with the structure of art with a view to public performance. But artistic studies have not by any means in view the one and only object of educating artists who can convey to the public æsthetic impressions. They also have the end in view of educating a public which shall be able to appreciate artistic performances, to enter into them, to feel themselves those emotions which others undertake to express.

The instruction given in school is not sufficient. The education of the senses and of the spirit should aim at raising the minds of the general public to such a level that, as M. Adolphe Appia has it, they may themselves become real collaborators in those artistic and symbolic representations which the most gifted people are able to give them. I am convinced that education through and for rhythm is able to awaken the artistic sense in all who go in for it; and that is why I shall fight to the end to have it introduced into schools and to make educationists understand the important and positive rôle which art should play in the education of the people.

It is not enough, as far as the arts of painting, architecture, and sculpture go, to have schools where the representation of line, colour, light and shadow, contrast, and grouping is taught; the pupils of these schools must be taught to feel in themselves the rhythm which arranges, defines, gives balance to, harmonises and animates works of sculpture, architecture, and painting. Nor is it enough to teach the pupils of conservatoires to interpret with their

fingers the masterpieces of music; above all they must be initiated into the feelings of the composers, which gave rise to the music, into the movement which had made their feelings immortal, into the rhythm which governs and gives style to the music. A fugue of Bach is a dead thing for those people who do not themselves experience the conflicts of antagonistic elements creating contrast, and the harmony of the co-operating elements which give a feeling of peace and concord.

The ideal teacher must be at the same time psychologist, physiologist, and artist. A perfect citizen on leaving school should be able to live not only normally but also fully. He should be able to create and also to sympathise with the feelings of others. All who train for teachers will not become ideal teachers, nor their pupils perfect human beings; but an enormous effort to this end should be made. An artistic education of which physical exercise forms a large part is the only sure means of soothing our over-excited nerves. If this exercise is taken mainly in the way of sport and games it will overstep the mark and create generations devoid of feeling. It is necessary that in education intellectual and physical development should play an equally important part, and it seems to me that Eurhythmics would have a good influence in both these directions.

E. JAQUES-DALCROZE.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO THE READER

This book has been written for the use of pupils taking courses in Eurhythmics at the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze and at schools which have acquired the right to teach the Dalcroze Method. Its object is to help pupils to recapitulate and analyse the ideas they have gained in the course of their practical work. Only those who have personal experience of this special form of education can make use of the book, for Eurhythmics is above all a matter of practical experience, and readers who have not had this experience, under the direction of a fully-trained and certificated teacher, cannot claim the right to teach the method. This is especially so since a close relationship exists between the rhythmic exercises and the music by which they are controlled in time and space, and no study of this relationship will be found in this volume. Moreover the reader will find no instructions as to methods of gaining power to improvise at the pianoforte, without which the teaching of Eurhythmics is impossible.

E. JAQUES-DALCROZE.

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Musical Expression. MATHIS-LUSSY (NOVELLO).

EXPLANATIONS AND GENERAL RULES

IMPROVISATION.

Every teacher of Eurhythmics should have made a serious study of improvisation at the pianoforte, and of all the connections between the harmony of sounds and that of movements. He should be able to translate rhythms expressed by movements of the body into musical rhythms, and *vice-versâ*.

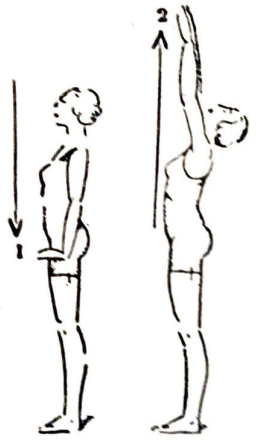
TECHNIC OF THE BODY.

As the method of Eurhythmics is based on practical experience, and on the analysis of physical sensations, it is important that the pupil should have a rational training in gymnastics and games. This training should be given in each lesson, or in supplementary lessons. No special system is advocated, but it must be one which aims not only at making the body supple and strong, but also at making the pupil fully conscious of muscular resistances and the laws governing the mechanism of the body. It is the teacher's duty to put the pupil in the way of this knowledge by giving him exercises in bodily technic which will promote suppleness of the arms, legs, trunk, strength in co-ordinated movements, and agility in walking, running, springing on the spot, or forward. *

LINES OF MOVEMENT.

The line of movement from the point in space 1 to the point in space 2 constitutes the first beat. The duration of the sound of the first beat extends from the moment in time at 1 to the moment at 2.

The vertical line ↓ is the strongest; it leads to the moment 1 but belongs to the moment 2 in duple time, and to the moment 3 in triple time, etc., except when it is merely a preparatory movement.



In this connection it should be noted:—

1. That the duration of a beat is limited by two fixed points in space, or by two fixed moments in time.

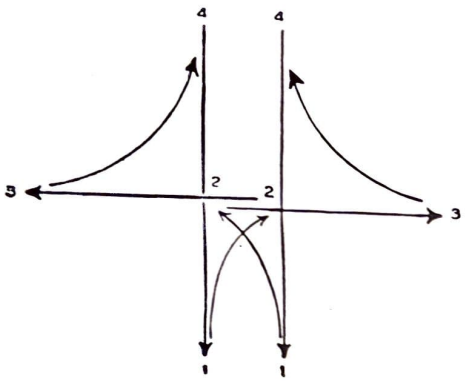
* See the volume of the Jaques-Dalcroze Method: *La Plastique Animée* (No. 1533, Jobin's Edition, Lausanne. London: Novello & Co., Ltd.).

2.—That both the moment of departure and the moment of arrival can be interpreted in a perceptible or imperceptible way.

3.—That when the moment of departure or arrival is interpreted in an imperceptible way it represents either a first movement after a rest or a last movement before a rest.

The arm which is beating time may pause slightly on the moment of departure or arrival, or at once attack the following movement. This depends on the *tempo*, the extent of the movement, or the force (*see* page 11).

Example.—Here is the beating of four-time with both arms:—



The duration of the *first* beat is determined by the fixed points (moments) 1 and 2:—

The duration of the *second* beat is determined by the fixed points (moments) 2 and 3, etc.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MOVEMENTS.

THE FIVE KINDS OF VERTICAL MOVEMENTS.

The lines of movement denoted throughout the text of this volume are of arbitrary length. To realise their extent the following principle must be thoroughly grasped.

The slower the *tempo* the greater the extent of the movement, and *vice-versâ*:—

1st Kind.—*Wrist* only. Upper arm vertical—Forearm horizontal—Movement of the hand

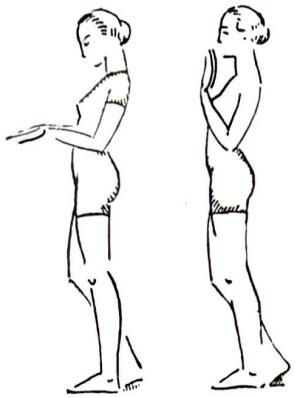
2nd Kind.—*Elbow*. Upper arm vertical—Movements of the forearm and hand.

3rd Kind.—*Elbow*. Upper arm horizontal—Movements of the forearm and hand.

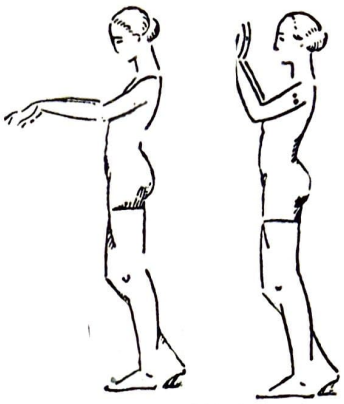
4th Kind.—*Shoulder*. Movements of the whole arm from 2 to 8 (*see* the diagram of vertical divisions in space).

5th Kind.—*Shoulder* (from 1 to 9) (Compare page 12 with the five lengths of step).

1st kind.

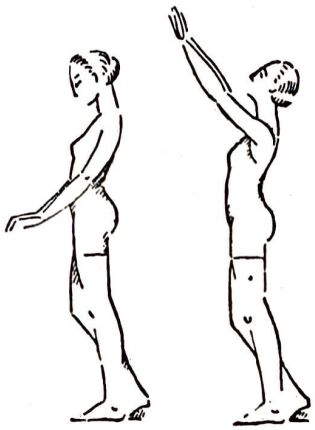


2nd kind.

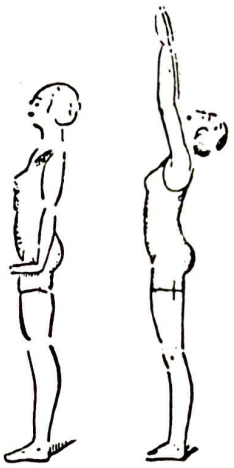


3rd kind.

THE FIVE KINDS OF VERTICAL MOVEMENTS TO BE DONE IN DUPLE-TIME.



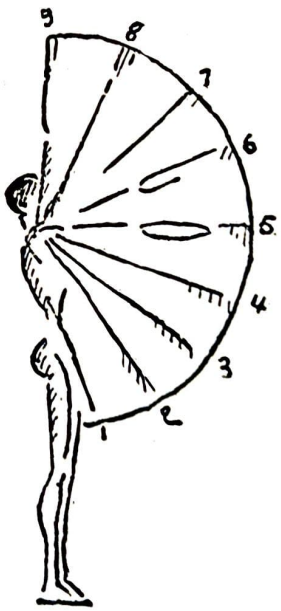
4th kind.



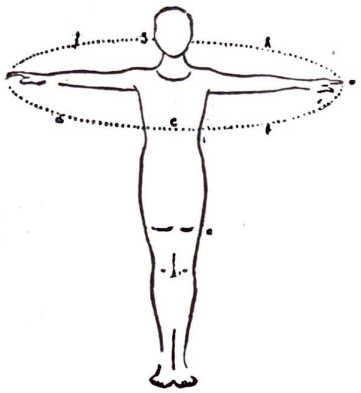
5th kind.

DIVISIONS OF SPACE.

The nine directions for vertical movements of arms and hands.

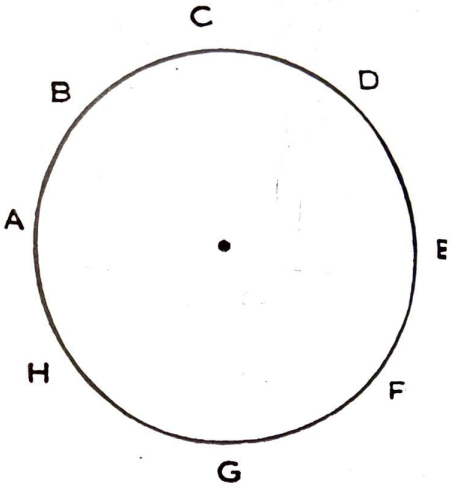


THE EIGHT HORIZONTAL DIRECTIONS.

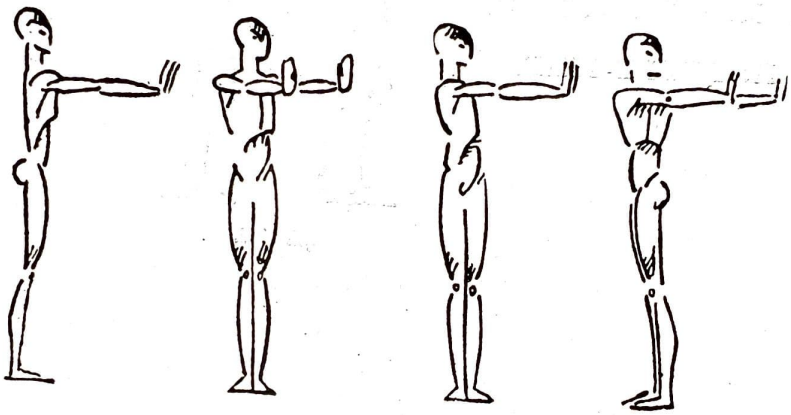


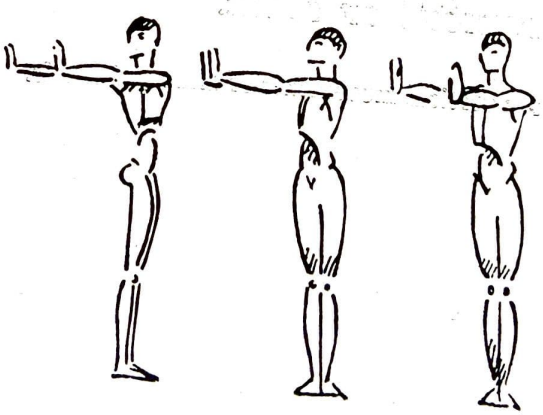
These divide the circular space, in the centre of which stands the human body.

This division is applicable to simple steps, gestures of the arm, springs and lunges.



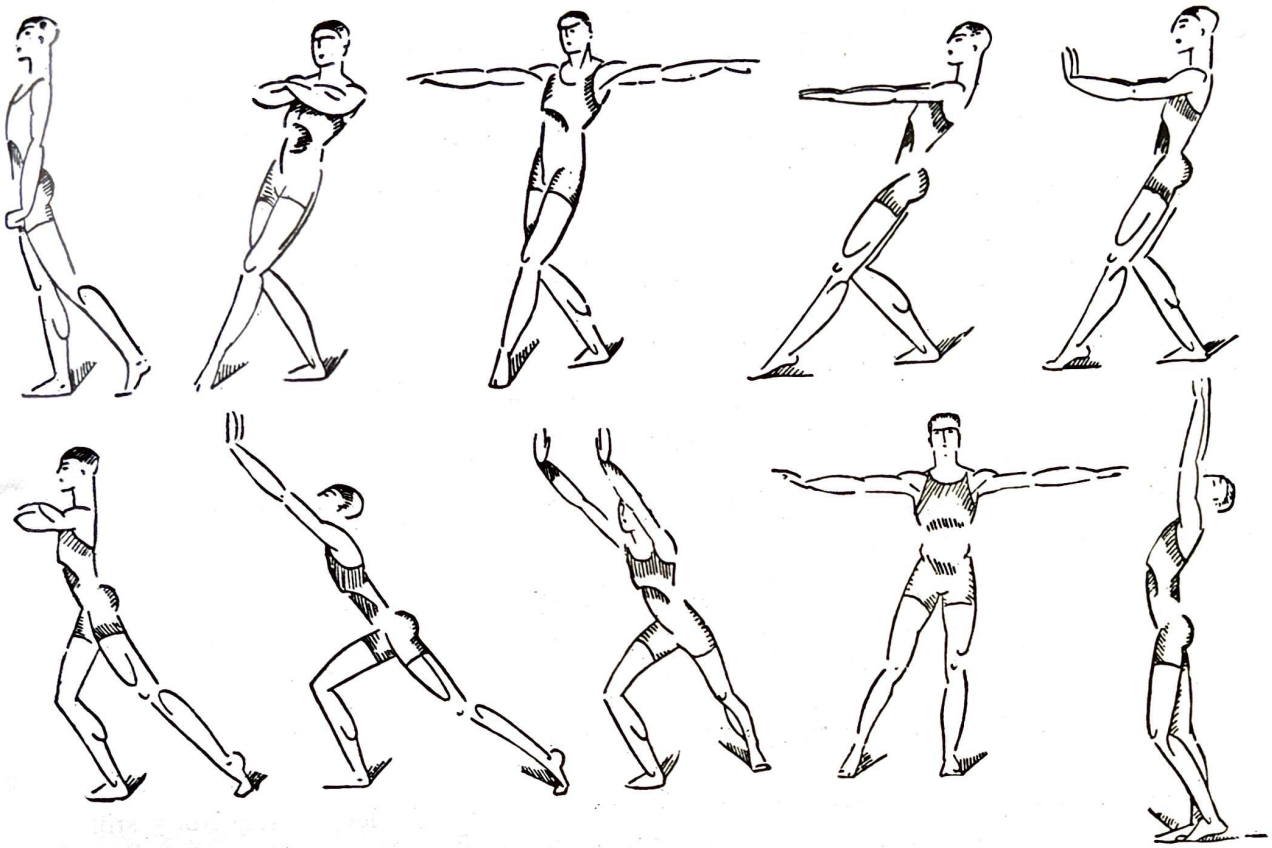
See page 14, the eight directions of steps.





THE NOTE-VALUES OF 2 TO 9 BEATS.

(*See* the detailed study of note-values in each chapter.)



STYLE.

It is the character of the music that enables us to determine which are of greater importance, the points of arrest, of departure and of arrival, or the lines of movement connecting these points.

With the nuances *Legato*, *Staccato*, and *Tenuto*, we give the chief importance to the points of arrest, and with the nuances *Piano*, *Forte*, *Crescendo*, and *Decrescendo*, to the lines of movement (*see* Nuances p. 14).

Tempo is also a component of style, as are all its varieties of acceleration or retardation.

STEPPING.

Explanation of musical signs which specially concern *stepping* :—

(*a*) Each note represents the length of a step, or of a sound.

(*b*) The actual moment when the foot is placed upon the ground represents the beginning or attack of a given sound.

(c) The moment when another foot begins to move represents the moment of completion of that given sound.

The crotchet (♩) represents the beginning and duration of one sound, the placing of one foot, the beginning and duration of movement of the other foot.

The first step.—The teacher plays at least two beats in advance in order to enable the pupil to feel tempo.

The last step.—The foot stops moving at the moment of attack of the last sound. While this sound still vibrates, the other foot continues its movement and is placed beside the first one at the exact moment when the sound stops.

A rest lacks movement, but not life.

Tempo.—Notes only represent relative duration. Each of the exercises in this volume should be done in varying tempi.

Accelerando and *Ritardando* only become truly living when they form a perceptible contrast, distinct from the *normal* time.

THE FIVE LENGTHS OF STEP.

We shall call the normal step *Step No. 3.* Step No. 4 will be longer, step No. 5 still longer. Step No. 2 shorter than No. 3, step No. 1 shorter than No. 2. The manner of making these steps will depend on the *quickness* or *slowness* of the *tempo* in which they have to be made, and also on the degree of muscular resistance in the leg. That is to say:—

(a) If we want to make a *more rapid* step *with the least muscular resistance* in the leg, when we are walking with the medium step No. 3, we must make a shorter step (No. 2) and the thigh will be raised very little. If we want to walk *still more quickly* with the *least muscular resistance* in the leg, the steps will become *shorter still* and the body will remain vertical, for a short and rapid step does not necessitate a forward displacement of the body. The arms will feel no need of movement either forward or backward.

(b) If we want to make a *slower* step with the *greatest muscular resistance* in the leg, when we are walking with the medium step No. 3, we must take a shorter step (No. 2) and the thigh will be raised higher than in step No. 3. If we want to walk *still more slowly* with the *greatest muscular resistance* in the leg, the steps will become *shorter still*, the thigh will be raised as high as possible with strong resistance. The body will remain in a vertical position.

(*c*) If we wish to make a *more rapid* step, *increasing the muscular activity* of the leg, when we are walking with the medium step No. 3, we shall make longer steps, and the body will be inclined forward. If we want to walk *still more quickly* with *increase of muscular force* in the leg, we shall make *still longer* steps, and the weight of the body being thrown well forward will force the legs to run and make springs. The natural swing of the arms forward and backward will become so accentuated (right arm with the left leg) that it will carry forward the body and help the legs to make longer and lighter springs.

(*d*) If we wish to make *slower* steps, with *least muscular resistance* in the leg, when we are walking with the medium step No. 3, we must make *longer* steps with the leg stretched out and with forward displacement of the body.

In a *still slower* time, the leg, kept very free, will be further stretched out, the weight of the body being gradually transferred forward until the toe touches the ground. The arms, slightly contracted, will try to balance the body.

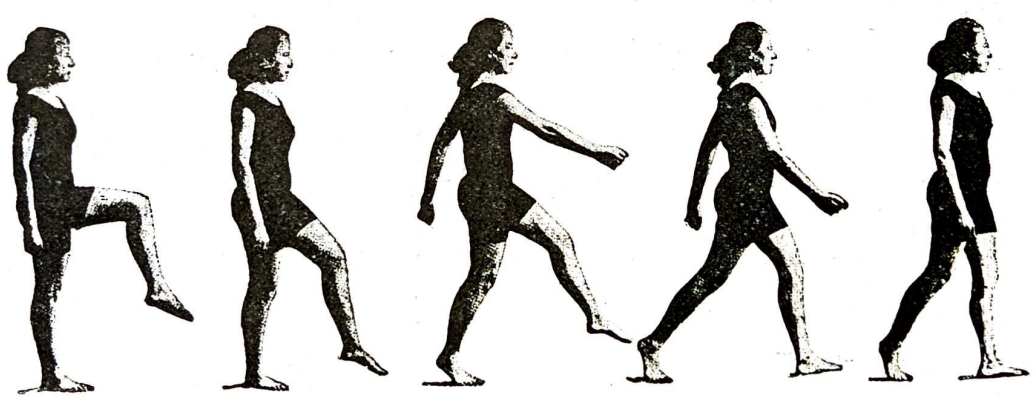
ANALYSIS OF MOVEMENTS IN WALKING.

We shall call the *supporting leg* the leg which has just made the step and now supports the weight of the body, and the *free* leg that which is about to make the movement for a step.

Supporting Leg.—As soon as the foot is placed on the ground, after making a step, the muscles begin to stiffen the joints. This stiffening passes from below upwards.

(4) Hip-joint.
(3) Knee.
(2) Ankle.
(1) Toes, sole of the foot.

Free Leg.—As soon this leg begins the movement for the forward step, quitting the point of departure in the rear of the body, all muscular resistance should be suppressed and

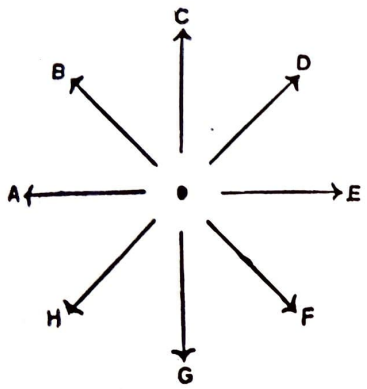


the weight of the body which is inclined forward should carry with it a leg *free* of all weight. While the step is being made, the point of the foot is lowered and the heel raised. First the toes are placed on the ground, then the sole.

The step originates in the hip-joint. The knee, the ankle, and the toes, remain passive.

MOVEMENTS ON ONE SPOT.

The 8 horizontal segments described in the circular space in the midst of which stands the human body. While the body rests on the *supporting* leg, the other leg, the *free* one, can be extended in 8 different directions, quickly or slowly, by steps, without displacement of the body, or by lunges:—



ENERGY.

It would be impossible to conceive of individual will if it were deprived of these three essential factors:—

(1) Imaginative conception of
(2) Initial willing of
(3) Motor realisation of

} the act.

The organs of the will are:—

(1) The cerebral cells.
(2) The motor nervous system.
(3) The muscular system.

Hopp.—The order *Hopp* appeals to the centres of control.

Independence of movement is obtained by exercises in contrasting and dissociated movements.

Muscular energy is the result of the power
Muscular enervation is the result of lack of power

} of the muscles *to contract*, singly or collectively with every degree of *strength* and grade of *quickness or slowness.*

Muscular suppleness is the result of capacity
Muscular stiffness is the result of incapacity

} of the muscles to decontract with every degree of *strength* and in every grade of *tempo.*

The least effort.—The necessity for *least effort* in order to obtain the realisation of an act

is both a biological and æsthetic law. The fact of acting in such a way as to employ the minimum of force necessary proves both that the individual knows himself and also that he knows exactly the act which he wills to perform.

Dynamic gives the life and character of the movement.

An increase of force in a co-operating group causes an acceleration.

A diminution of force in a co-operating group causes a retardation.

An increase of force in a group which is both co-operating and antagonistic causes a *crescendo*, a diminution of force brings about a *diminuendo*.

CARRIAGE OF THE WEIGHT OF THE BODY IN SLOW OR RAPID WALKING.

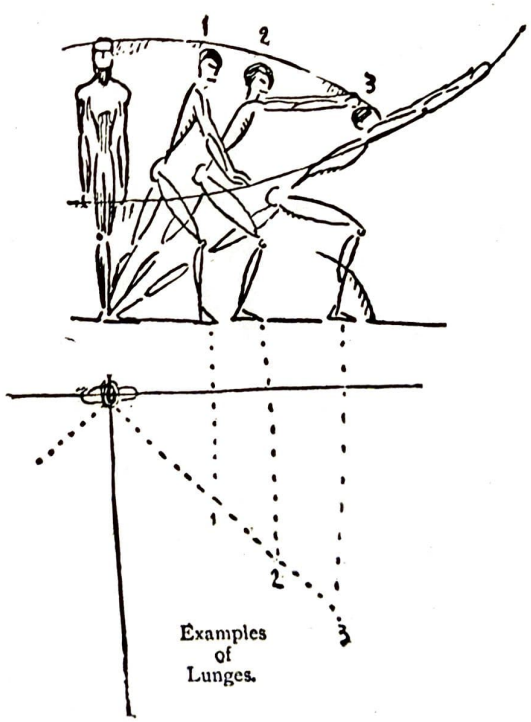
Slow Walking.—In slow walking (whether forward or backward) the anterior and posterior muscles work together to hold the back erect.

Quick Walking.—In quick walking (whether forward or backward) the upper part of the body leans forward or backward, and the contraction of the muscles of the back is greater in walking forward, the contraction of the muscles of the abdomen is greater in walking backward.

N.B.—It is very important to do the preparatory exercises of Chapters I. and II. (*see* page 23) in every degree of *tempo*.

Note.—The foot (the support of the weight of the body) is sometimes very feeble. In such cases remedial gymnastic exercises are necessary. With weakly children the wearing of sandals with stiff soles frequently causes flat feet. The muscles can be strengthened by accustoming the child to pick up objects with the feet.

Lunging.—The laws of bodily equilibrium show themselves best in lunging. When the muscles of the back relax the body falls forward quite naturally, and the step is the inevitable result of this relaxation. When a vertical position is wanted, following on this lunge, the muscles of the back raise the vertebral column.



Examples of Lunges.