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The development of Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics as a field of study in Vienna and the expansion of Eurhythmics in Austria

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Inside Austria, Vienna has always been the only place to study Eurhythmics on university level – besides Laxenburg (School Hellerau-Laxenburg 1925-1939).

Vienna's Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics was the first Bachelor- and Masterstudy in Europe and is one of the largest programmes for this study in the world. (Sych 2016, 5) It attracts students from other European and non-European countries. (Witoszynskij 2016, 18)

1865 Émile Jaques-Dalcroze was born in Vienna: Am Hof 8, 1010 Wien

The commemorative plaque for the 150th birth-anniversary in 2015 is located in the 1st district of Vienna at the building "Am Hof 8" (since 2022 located at the backside of the house, "Tiefer Graben 6"). It says:

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze 1865-1950

Composer, pianist, educator and founder of Eurhythmics

"Rhythm is the source of all the arts"

He was born in this house and lived here until 1875. His method is based on education to music and through music. Eurhythmics combines music and movement and is effective in artistic, educational and therapeutic areas worldwide.



© Christoph Falschlunger: picture of the plaque in Vienna (Austria) at "Tiefer Graben 6" (29.04.2023)

1909 Jaques-Dalcroze received an invitation to present his work at the K&K Academy for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. The idea to introduce the new method for the benefit of students in instrumental classes, as well as of those in opera and drama training was born (Heller, 1994, p. 62).

1911 a school for Dalcroze was established in Hellerau near Dresden, where people interested in the new method could receive an education 'to music and through music' (Dalcroze). One of these students was Gertrude Wiesenthal, who was sent to Dalcroze in Hellerau on a scholarship from the Vienna Academy of Music and Performing Arts. (Heller, 1994, p. 64).

1914/15 'Rhythmic Gymnastics according to Dalcroze', led by Gertrude Wiesenthal, was introduced at the Music Academy in Vienna as a compulsory, subsidiary subject in the preparatory courses in piano and violin. Students of the teacher training courses attended the same courses as observers (Heller, 1994, p. 65).

In the following years, the teaching of rhythmic gymnastics was extended to the lower study years of the drama and opera school (Archive of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, 1919, Kt.14/09-45), as well as to the training in artistic dance, with children and adults taught by the Wiesenthal sisters – Gertrude in rhythmic gymnastics and Grete in dance (Heller, 1994, p. XVII).

1923 a guest performance by the Hellerau School took place at the Vienna Konzerthaus as part of the 'Week of Modern Music' (Chladek, 1975, p. 62). A second evening featured a presentation of the school's pedagogical work, which led to the invitation to relocate the Hellerau school to Laxenburg near Vienna (Chladek, 1975, p. 64).

1925/26 the Hellerau School relocated with pupils and teachers from Dresden to Laxenburg near Vienna, where it was called 'Schule Hellerau-Laxenburg'. The School Hellerau-Laxenburg offered three training courses: eurhythmics (director: Christine Baer-Frissell, and from 1932 Brigitte Müller), gymnastics and dance (director: Valeria Kratina, and from 1930 Rosalia Chladek) (Witoszynskyj, Schindler, Schneider, 2011, p. 8).

The head of the school, Christine Baer-Frissell, was a charismatic personality. Her artistic-pedagogical orientation towards Eurhythmics was convincing and her open-mindedness towards progressive educational concepts opened doors to the educational institutions in Vienna. She led further education courses there and worked together with Montessori teachers. In addition, she presented lectures in Austria and abroad, wrote articles and created radio broadcasts through which she wanted to introduce Eurhythmics teaching to her listeners (Tervooren, 1999, p. 238). With the impressive variety of her public relations work, Baer-Frissell made a significant contribution to the awareness and further dissemination of Eurhythmics as an artistic-pedagogical subject.

The School Hellerau-Laxenburg organised annual summer courses and further training for teachers, musicians, music teachers, dancers and dance teachers and other interested persons from various professional groups. Guests from abroad were also invited to the summer courses and training, guests such as Mimi Scheiblaue (Zurich) for Eurhythmics and Carl Orff (Munich) for percussion (Witoszynskyj, Schindler, Schneider, 2011, p. 8).

The school achieved artistic success and international fame with numerous performances in Austria and abroad (Alexander, Groll, 1975, p. 100).

1939 The closure of the School Hellerau-Laxenburg was a result of the pressures of the political situation. The offer to continue the school under the new rulers were not accepted, as the existing ideals of the school with regard to the image of the independent, creative person would have had to be abandoned (Oberzaucher, Giel, 2002, p. 81).

1941 the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna appointed Brigitte Müller, who was trained in Hellerau and Hellerau-Laxenburg, to the Department of Music Education (Archive of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, 1942, Kt.47/09-45). In the following years, she taught ear training to the students in the school music programme as well as Eurhythmics and ear training in the dance department (Müller, oral history).

1942/43 the Department of Music Education established a three-year seminar for Eurhythmics education as well as a Eurhythmics course for lay people under the direction of Brigitte Müller. (Heller, 1994, p.782f).

1945/46 the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna discontinued the training in the subject of 'Rhythmic Education' which had been under development until then (Heller, 1994, p. 94).

1952 Rosalia Chladek was appointed as the new head of the dance department at the Vienna Music Academy after ten years as head of dance education at the Vienna Conservatory (Alexander, Groll, 1975, p. 100). After her training in Hellerau, Chladek successfully turned to expressive dance and dedicated herself to her choreographic work. She had a high regard for Eurhythmics and remained a strong advocate for its approaches. After years together with Brigitte Müller at the School Hellerau-Laxenburg, the two subject representatives continued their collaboration at the Vienna Conservatory from 1941. They then continued their collaboration at the Academy of Music.

In the years that followed, Chladek encouraged Brigitte Müller to set up her own Eurhythmics training in the rooms of the dance department in the Gardetrakt/Schloss Schönbrunn, in Vienna's thirteenth district (Müller, oral history).

The development of Eurhythmics studies in Vienna since 1959/60

1959 Brigitte Müller proposed the establishment of a main subject at the Department of Music Education at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts, which was to serve the training of teachers for Eurhythmics Education, as one of the most modern, successful educational methods in the musical field (Heller, 1997, p. 93).

1959/60 the Department of Music Education established a major in *Eurhythmics Education*. The duration of the study was six semesters, analogous to the studies for instrumental teachers.

The head was Brigitte Müller, who taught the subjects Eurhythmics, ear training and piano improvisation. Rosalia Chladek, head of the dance department, took over the movement classes that the rhythm students attended together with the dance students.

1964 the first female graduates successfully completed their studies with the teaching qualification examination for Eurhythmics Education.

1964/65 parallel to the existing branch of study of six semesters, a second branch of study of four semesters was established for teachers who completed their training. This measure, in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Education and the Arts, was intended to meet the shortage of teachers so that the recently established subject of 'Rhythmic-Musical Education' could be taught at educational institutions for kindergarten education (Niegl, 1989, p. 43f). In a simultaneous curriculum reform, the area of pedagogy was reorganised and given more weight.

1970/71 the Academy of Music and Performing Arts received university status. Ingrid Giel (Berlin) took over from Brigitte Müller as director of the Eurhythmics Education programme.

1972/73 saw changes in the curriculum: analogous to the study programme for instrumental teachers, the study programme Rhythmic-Musical Education was extended by one year. This made it possible to expand the study content to include 'Rhythmic-Musical Education in early childhood' and 'Eurhythmics in Special Education'. In both these areas, increased career opportunities had been emerging for some time.

1979 Just the study over eight semesters remained.

1982/83 Rudolf Konrad (Hannover) was called to Vienna as a visiting professor and arrived with a team of his graduates, among them Angelika Hauser and Ralph Illini.

1983 the Arts University Studies Act stipulated that artistic studies had to be permeated by scientific work.

1989/90 the new study regulations according to the Arts University Studies Act 1983 came into force. It provided for two stages of study:

The teaching qualification for Rhythmic-Musical Education was obtained after passing the first diploma examination (eight semesters). The second stage of the programme allowed the academic title of Magister/Magistra of Arts (Mag.art.) after passing the second diploma examination (four semesters). The second stage could not be offered in Vienna at the time.

1995/96 the main subjects (potential majors in the programme) were introduced: Elementary Musical Education, Ensemble Leading, Improvisation and Movement Accompaniment, Instrument, Popular Music and Eurhythmics in Special Education.

1998 the Federal Act on the Organisation of the Universities of the Arts (KUOG) gave all art colleges, and thus also the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, the status of universities (Study Guide of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna 2001/02, p. 18).

2002/03 as a result of the KUOG, institutes were established at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. Eurhythmic studies were offered at the Institute for Music and Movement Education and Music Therapy. Angelika Hauser became the head of the institute, and Ralph Illini headed the Department of Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics.

As a consequence of the Bologna Declaration, the first study section of the previous diploma study programme Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics was converted into a Bakkalaureat study programme over eight semesters to conclude with the academic title Bakkalaureus/Bakkalaurea artium (Bakk.art.). The curriculum reform according to the Bologna Declaration has as its aim the internationalisation of studies in order to bring about an increased mobility of students and teachers at European universities.

2003/04 the Master's degree programme Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics was introduced to run over two semesters, and to allow students to obtain the academic title Magister/Magistra artium (Mag.art.).

2010/11 relocating from the classrooms in the Gardetrakt Schönbrunn (used for many decades) to the first district in the newly adapted rooms of the Institute of Music and Movement Education and Music Therapy in Singerstraße 26A.

2015/16 saw the renaming of the previous Bakkalaureat and Magister degree programmes into bachelor's and master's degree programmes in Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics.

2016 The Music Therapy became an own institute, that's why the former institut was renamed in Department of Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics and Music Physiology with two divisions.

2017 Hanne Pilgrim (Berlin) became the new Eurhythmics professor and head of the division Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics.

2020 A new professorship for theories of music and movement/Eurhythmics was established. From now on there is the possibility to do a PhD-study in the field of Music and Movement Education/Eurhythmics at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna.

2022 Stepahnie Schroedter as professor for theories became the new head of the department and Meike Schmitz (Weimar) – professor for Eurhythmics – heads the division of Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics.

Summary

Enveloped in everchanging social and educational-political currents, the artistic-pedagogical subject area of Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics shows a dynamic development. Legal regulations, changes in higher education policy, initiatives by teachers and students, as well as influences from other professional fields have all led to multiple changes in the curricula over the decades and have kept Rhythmics as a subject field in motion.

Thanks to their versatility, imagination and enthusiasm, the graduates were gradually able to introduce Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics into more and more areas, also non-musical areas. The resulting expansion of professional fields between art, (music) education and therapeutic settings did not remain without influence on the approaches followed in the training of students. As a result, the professional goals and contents of the original 'music education through movement' were further developed in the direction of education and development of the personality, whereby the areas of sensorimotor skills, communication and creativity were given increased weight.

The teachers provide lively insights into the current state of development of Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics in Vienna. They do this through their publications, numerous artistic and artistic-pedagogical presentations, contributions to the professional development of others, projects and workshops at international congresses and presentations at specialist conferences in Austria and abroad. By organising their own congresses and symposia at the Department of Music and Movement Education/Rhythmics and Music Physiology, and through other diverse contributions (also within the framework of Erasmus programmes at European colleges and universities, for example) they provide stimuli that advance professional discussion and the exchange of research results on an international level. Teachers as well as students and graduates are repeatedly awarded prizes and thus they also receive recognition for their extraordinary achievements.

Special mention should also be made of the decades of successful cooperation between the education programme and the Austrian Professional Association for Rhythmics (Österreichischer Berufsverband für RhythmikMB – ÖBR). It was founded in 1973 and its function is to represent and network Rhythmics practitioners, to strengthen the subject area of Rhythmics/Music and Movement and Rhythmic-musical Education institutionally and in public, to offer further education and trainings and to facilitate publications (statutes of ÖBR: www.rhythmikMB.at , http://www.rhythmikmb.at/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/OeBR_STATUTEN_neu.pdf).

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This book will be published in English in 2023: <https://reichert-verlag.de/>

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