

Overview of the History of Eurhythmics in Germany

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Timeline

Before Hellerau

- The popularity of the new Dalcroze Method is supported by a strong *Rhythmusbewegung* in Germany that is connected to reform pedagogy, youth movement, dance, different kinds of gymnastics and the overarching idea of *Lebensphilosophie*.
- In 1905 a Conference for music pedagogy is held in Solothurn where Émile Jacques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) presents his ideas to an international audience and in the following gains great influence on German scholars.
- 1906: The Swiss architect and theorist of stage lightning Adolphe Appia gets to know Dalcroze's work and collaborates with him in order to realise their artistic ideas.
- Dalcroze travels with his female students to Germany and does successful showings of his method.

Hellerau

- In 1909/1910 The *Königliche Musikhochschule Berlin* as well as Wolf Dohrn (1878-1914), founder of the Gartenstadt Hellerau, want Dalcroze to move to Germany. Subsequently Dalcroze settles in Hellerau near Dresden in 1910 and establishes a fulltime training program in eurhythmics.



Figure 1: Festspielhaus in Hellerau

- 1910/1911 first year of education
- More and more students are joining the program, the education becomes more strictly in terms of diploma and requirements (especially in regards to musical skills).
- The atmosphere and place is often described as an 'idyllic bubble'; it attracts international audience for the artistic showings. The pedagogy is generally more acclaimed than the artistic part of the method.

STUNDENPLAN FÜR 1910/11 DER BILDUNGSANSTALT JAQUES-DALCROZE IM ALTEN LANDHAUS ZU DRESDEN									
Tag	Stad	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5
MONTAG	Für Rhythm. Gymnastik	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	HERREN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
	Für Sollege		HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke
	Übungsraum		DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
DIENSTAG	Für Rhythm. Gymnastik	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
	Für Sollege								
	Übungsraum		DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
MITTWOCH	Für Rhythm. Gymnastik	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	HERREN 1. Jahr Herr Meuschke	KINDER Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
	Für Sollege								
	Übungsraum		DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
DONNERSTAG	Für Rhythm. Gymnastik	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze		DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
	Für Sollege								
	Übungsraum		DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
FREITAG	Für Rhythm. Gymnastik								
	Für Sollege								
	Übungsraum								
SONN- ABEND	Für Rhythm. Gymnastik	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	KINDER Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze	DAMEN 1. Jahr, 2. Abteilung Rhythm. Gymnastik Herr Jaques-Dalcroze
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Figure 2: Example for a curriculum

- The concern of being mixed up with other methods of gymnastics is rising; additionally there are beginning conflicts with the 'dancers' who want to develop a more autonomous form of dancing.
- Due to World War I the school closes in 1914. In spite of the short period of his work in Hellerau Jaques-Dalcroze has had an influence in Germany that can hardly be overestimated especially on the avantgarde dance movement, theater, different kinds of gymnastics and music pedagogy.



Figure 3: Performance in the Festspielhaus.



Figure 4: Mimi Scheiblauer's Diploma from Hellerau

Eurhythmics in other Institutions until 1933

Higher education

- After a showing in Berlin in 1910 the German musicologist Hermann Kretzschmar is convinced of the pedagogic aspect of the Dalcroze method and tries to find a teacher for Dalcroze lessons at the Königliche Hochschule Berlin.
- From 1915 on Charlotte Pfeffer (1881-1970) is officially teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the professional music training programs and becomes a professor in 1925 (Kestenberg-Reform).
- Due to the Kestenberg-Reforms which led to a professionalisation of the education in music, eurhythmics becomes an important element in Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools.



Figure 3: Charlotte Pfeffer



Figure 4: Leo Kestenberg, 1905

- As early as in 1910 also other conservatories begin to implement elements of the Dalcroze method, e. g. in Braunschweig, Cologne, Frankfurt, Essen, Dortmund.
- Also founding of private institutes: e. g. Otto Blensdorf (1871-1947) in Elberfeld (later Jena).



Figure 5: Otto Blensdorf, together with his daughter Charlotte Blensdorf and his student Gerda Alexander

Associations and federations

- Already in 1918 conflicts are growing between German Eurhythmic practitioners and the Dalcroze Association in Geneva. There are ambivalences regarding the ‘master’: The mostly female teachers strive towards independence (expressed in their wish to focus more on gymnastics/dance) but other than e. g. Otto Blensdorf and Rudolf Bode (1881-1970) they still feel committed and loyal towards Dalcroze.
- Conflict between Hellerau-Laxenburg and Geneva: The German *Dalcroze-Bund* is torn apart. The disputes ignite over the question of who has the right to issue diplomas; Dalcroze demands to be named even on the diplomas given by the German institutions.

- In 1926 *Deutscher Rhythmikbund* is founded and represented by Elfriede Feudel (1881-1960); this sets the ground for the growing independence of the German Eurhythmics.

- In 1933 End of *Rhythmik-Bund*. Feudel forms a NS-compatible association and leads it until 1945.

- For further reading concerning Eurhythmics in times of nationalsocialism: Silke Oevers (1991): *Die Rolle der Rhythmik im Nationalsozialismus*. AMBR-Website, (www.musikbewegung.de) see *Studium* → *Schriftliche Abschlussarbeiten Studierender*



Figure 6: Elfriede Feudel

After 1945

Institutions and general development

- Different branches of eurhythmics develop due to the very individual influence of the teachers who teach at the different institutions of higher education all over Western Germany.

- Founding of private institutes

- *Rhythmisch-Musikalische Erziehung* is integrated in national curricula in schools and higher education

- Since 1972 part-time education programs, e. g. in Akademie Remscheid

- In eastern Germany/GDR only partial integration of some elements into educational programs

- Conflicts with the association of music schools, and with a new form of music pedagogy, *Elementare Musikpädagogik*, which slowly is taking over the leading role of early music education

- Today: in higher education 6 study programs exist (11 before): Berlin, Hannover, Weimar, Trossingen, Dresden, Regensburg

- As eurhythmics has been pushed aside by other methods and practices, there is an effort to recapture the identity of Eurhythmics, to look at its roots and to find a common ground. More writings are being published due to the wish to consolidate Eurhythmics through scientific research.

Federations

- 1948 *Arbeitskreis Rhythmische Erziehung*, transformed 1964 in *Bundesverband Rhythmische Erziehung* based in Academy Remscheid

- Today: *Arbeitskreis Musik und Bewegung / Rhythmik an Hochschulen e.V. (AMBR)* [National Association Music and Movement / Eurhythmics at Universities]

Family tree¹

Mostly women with highly individual biographies, especially due to the turmoils of the first and second world war. Most influential was Elfriede Feudel; many of her students became involved in the higher education system. All of them developed different focuses and methods which led to highly individualised curricula. This, and the early prioritisation of dance and movement have led to the fact that the German Eurhythmics differ significantly from the early Dalcroze method.

First generation (taught by Dalcroze)

Second Generation

Third Generation

Fourth Generation

Fifth Generation

Christiane Baer, Ernst Ferand-Freud (Freie Schule Hellerau – Vienna-Laxenburg)

Otto Blensdorf (Wuppertal – Jena; strives for the anchoring of eurhythmics in school curricula)

Gerda Alexander (Jena – Denmark; *Eutonie*)

Hildegard Tauscher (Jena – Weimar – Berlin)

Charlotte Blensdorf (Jena – USA – Geneva)

Rudolf Bode (München; *Bode-Gymnastik*, involved in NS-ideology)

Erna Conrad (founder of Rhythmikseminar Essen/Folkwang)

Ursula Zantop (Essen – Remscheid)

Dorothee Brämer (Stuttgart)

Marianne Steffen-Wittek (Weimar)

Meike Britt Hübner (Weimar)

Anna Epping (Berlin; piano improvisation)

Leo Kestenberg (Prussian reformer in Berlin)

Hildegard Tauscher (Berlin; socialpedagogic work)

Elfriede Feudel (Dortmund – Leipzig – Essen – Stuttgart)

Gertrud Bünner (Dortmund – Stuttgart)

Martina Jacobi (Freiburg)

Marianne Siegwolf (Stuttgart – Freiburg)

Renate Kühnel (Regensburg)

Wilma Ellersiek (Folkwang – Stuttgart; *theater based eurhythmics*)

Holmrike Oesterhelt-Leiser (Köln)

Elisabeth Gutjahr (Trossingen)

Sabine Vliex (Trossingen)

Dierk Zaiser (Trossingen)

Tamara McCall (Osnabrück)

Marieke Rügert (Berlin)

Elisabeth Pelz (Hamburg, Lübeck)

Dorothea Weise (Trossingen, Köln – Berlin)

¹ Family tree, created in November 2022. Due to the simple structure of this family tree, more complex origins, such as studying with several teachers, could not be taken into account. The persons named were or are active in higher education.

Brunhild Hazivar (Braunschweig)

Gisela Hellmuth (Hamburg bis 1982)

Gudrun Schaefer (Wuppertal, Hamburg ab 1982)

Hartwig Maag (Münster)

Catrin Smorra (Hamburg – Hannover)

Gisela Schwartz (Berlin)

Hanne Pilgrim (Berlin, Weimar – Wien)

Amelie Hoellering (Hannover – München; psychological/anthropological focus)

Fabian Bautz (Luzern, Switzerland)

Hannelore Krauser-Wichert (Essen – Leipzig – Hildesheim)

Lieselotte Pistor (Stuttgart)

Elisabeth Braun (Ludwigsburg; focused on eurhythmics with disabled persons)

Karl Lorenz (Dortmund – Remscheid)

Thilde Lorenz-Ringlage (Essen – Leipzig – Remscheid)

Gisela Spiess-Jaenicke (Detmold; included performing arts in eurhythmics training)

Paul Hille (Wien)

Nina Gorter (Berlin; closest assistant to Dalcroze)

Gertrud Gottschalk-Wegmann (Génève – Hellerau – Braunschweig; taught in the M. Reinhardt-acting class)

Rudolf Konrad (Braunschweig – Hannover; *System Theory*)

Angelika Hauser (Wien)

Ralph Illini (Wien)

Brita Glathe (in-service training eurhythmics in Western and Eastern Germany)

Christine Straumer (Dresden)

Gertrud Grunow (Berlin; later Bauhaus teacher)

Gustav Gildenstein (Basel)

Dorothee Günther (München; *Günther-Schule, Orff Method*)

Käthe Jacob (Berlin – Tel Aviv)

Dore Jacobs (Essen; socialist/writer; founder of ‘organic gymnastics’)

Heinrich Jacoby (Hellerau – Munich – Berlin – Dresden; works with **Elsa Gindler**)

Karl Keil (Cologne)

Valeria Kratina (München – Vienna-Laxenburg; dancer, teacher of **Rosalia Chladek**)

??

↓ → **Barbara Kroll** (Berlin)

Reinhard Ring (Hannover)

Brigitte Müller (Berlin – later in Laxenburg/Wien)

Edmund Josef Müller (Cologne)

Hedwig Nottebohn (moved to Sweden; Modern Dance)

Charlotte Pfeffer (Berlin; *Psychomotoric system*)

Ingrid Giel (Vienna)

Karl-Heinz Taubert (Berlin)

Henrietta Rosenstrauch (Frankfurt – USA; focused on percussion instruments)

Mimi Scheiblauber (Zürich; therapeutic settings/Heilpädagogik)

Brigitte Steinmann (Hannover)

Meike Britt Hübner (Weimar)

Marie Adama von Scheltema (Berlin)

Hilda Senff (Paris – Düsseldorf; focused on gymnastics)

Mary Wigman (Hellerau – Dresden – Berlin; *German Ausdruckstanz*)

Toni Zander (Berlin)

Branches and further developments of Eurhythmics

- Feudel-Rhythmik: Attempt to systematise eurhythmics into elementary parameters (Time, Space, Force, Form); also strong focus on a systematic pedagogy, especially for children in elementary school
 - Psychomotoric education (Charlotte Pfeffer, therapeutic approach); later adopted by Ernst Kiphard
 - Eurhythmics in therapeutic settings/curative education (Mimi Scheiblaue, 1891–1968, Zürich; Brigitte Steinmann, Hannover)
 - Somatic practices: *Eutonie* (Gerda Alexander), *Gindler-Arbeit* (Elsa Gindler, influential in the US)
 - Group-based and interactionist system of eurhythmics (Gudrun Schaefer)
 - Integration of system theory into eurhythmics (Rudolf Konrad, Holmrike Oesterhelt-Leiser)
 - Performance based eurhythmics (Stuttgart and Cologne)
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- Günther-Schule (Dorothee Günther, in collaboration with Carl Orff), influential on the later *Elementare Musikpädagogik*; nowadays *EMP* has mostly replaced by name Eurhythmics in terms of (early) childhood education
 - *Ausdruckstanz*, modern dance (Mary Wigman, Rosalia Chladek etc.)
 - Movement training (Dore Jacobs)
 - *Bode-Gymnastik* (Rudolf Bode, influenced by Ludwig Klages' rhythm theory)



Figure 7: Dorothee Günther

Sources and Further Reading

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→ See also bibliography of the digital platform.

Figures

Figure 1: Hellerau.org

Figure 2: “Die Wurzeln der Rhythmikausbildung in Wien”, publication by the Institute for Eurhythmics in Vienna

Figure 3: Marco De Michelis Heinrich Tessenow. 1876-1950. Das architektonische Gesamtwerk, Stuttgart 1991. Abb. 34

Figure 4: Deutsches Tanzarchiv Köln

Figure 5: Ida-Seele-Archiv, Manfred Berger

Figure 6: Public Domain

Figure 7: https://www.eutoni.dk/gerda-alexander/billeder_ty.htm

Figure 8: Songrid Hürtgen-Busch. Die Wegbereiterinnen der rhythmisch-musikalischen Erziehung in Deutschland. Frankfurt a. M. 1996. Abb. 39

Figure 9: Photo by Myriam Blanc 1940, Deutsches Tanzarchiv Köln

