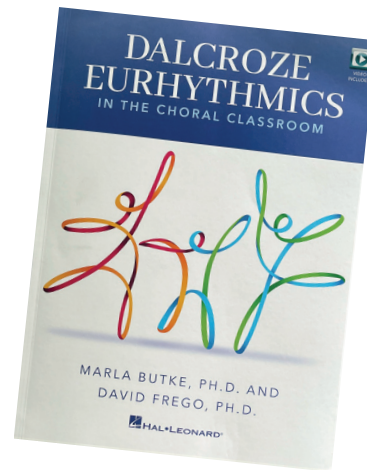


Reviewed by **W. Todd Anderson**

Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the Choral Classroom

Written by Marla Butke, PhD and David Frego, PhD
Hal Leonard, 2021



“**T**hat lesson was amazing, but I have no idea how we got to that incredible culminating activity!”

I hear variations of this often when conducting Dalcroze teacher training courses. Inherent in the Dalcroze approach is an emphasis on embodied musical engagement, which often leads to being so immersed in the lesson that it is hard to reconstruct it in hindsight. Most teachers who have experienced a Dalcroze workshop at conferences report similar experiences. Despite the best of efforts, the notes provided can often seem reductive or cryptic, making them difficult to implement in one’s own classroom.

Authors Marla Butke and David Frego have prepared a book that aptly addresses the typical ethereal quality of a Dalcroze Eurhythmics lesson, bringing clarity and understanding to the approach. As master teaching artists and founders of the American Eurhythmics Society, they have ample experience and understand the needs of music educators in the field. Dr. Butke taught choral music at the collegiate level until her recent retirement and has many years of experience utilizing eurhythmics activities in choral music instruction. Dr. Frego also has years of experience using Dalcroze in teaching children, students at the university level, and music educators to use the approach. Together, they are uniquely qualified to write about

eurhythmics in the choral classroom. Their book is practical and concrete. It clarifies the potential ambiguity of a Dalcroze Eurhythmics lesson as applied to the teaching of choral music and, more broadly, musical concepts in general—in the classroom and ensemble settings.

Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the Choral Classroom fills a specific need by focusing directly on the application of Dalcroze Eurhythmics to the choral setting. One chapter includes lists of ideas and activities based on meaningful movement that educators can incorporate in teaching choral music. Chapters devoted to focus, warmup, and solfège exercises are practical and detail ways to foster musical growth in choral music students. Many educators will find the discussion of Dalcroze solfège to be clarifying and useful. This is an area of the approach often overlooked, or one that educators undertake with a fair amount of trepidation.

The process notes provided in each lesson are cogent and direct; the instructions are easy to follow, and the logic behind the process is clear.

Within the pages are 60 lesson plans for elementary through collegiate choirs, as well as treble and low-voice choirs. Thirteen additional lesson plans include accompanying videos that demonstrate the concepts and the approach, bringing the lesson plans to life. Each lesson leads toward a musical experience grounded in the singing of choral music. The process notes provided in each lesson are cogent and

direct; the instructions are easy to follow, and the logic behind the process is clear.

One of the original motivations of Dalcroze in creating his approach to music education was to develop the inner hearing of his young adult students. Movement in Dalcroze Eurhythmics is always meaningful in the context of developing inner hearing and musicality. The movement serves to deepen musical understanding by translating the abstract plane of musicality into the concrete plane of embodied motion. This distinction is what delineates Dalcroze Eurhythmics from dance.

This book not only presents carefully crafted, process-oriented lessons, but also it provides a template for teachers seeking to understand a pragmatic approach to Dalcroze lesson planning. The basic structuring of the lessons included can be studied and the concepts applied to lesson planning for students in bands, orchestras, and general music classrooms.

Drs. Butke and Frego have created a well-designed and much-needed contribution to the field for music educators of all types, notably choral music educators. Most would agree we have much to learn about this powerful yet relatively underrepresented approach. *Dalcroze Eurhythmics in the Choral Classroom* advances the joy and force of eurhythmics and its incorporation into the classrooms of music educators. ■

W. TODD ANDERSON received his doctorate in music education at the University of Kentucky. He taught pre-kindergarten through Grade 8 in public schools for 15 years. Presently, he teaches graduate courses in Dalcroze Eurhythmics at the University of Kentucky and workshops in Dalcroze Eurhythmics both nationally and internationally. He is a master teaching artist of the American Eurhythmics Society and received the Dalcroze Certificate and License from The Dalcroze School of Music in New York.

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