

Cecilia John: an Australian heads the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics, 1932-1955

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Abstract

The London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics (LSDE) was established in 1913, and a significant figure in its history was the remarkable Cecilia John, one of seven Australians to complete the three-year course between 1917 and 1927. Apart from two short visits to Australia, John lived and taught in England for the remainder of her life. Following the death of the Founding Honorary Director of the LSDE in 1930, John became the Warden and then Principal of the School. She held this position until her death twenty-five years later. John was a dynamic figure in the Australian suffrage movement prior to 1920 yet few Dalcroze educators are aware of this part of her life. Conversely, there is lively evidence of her Eurhythmics studies in London from 1920-1923, and involvement in international Dalcroze Eurhythmics matters, which is unknown to many Australians. Few women could match her record as a mature age student who became Principal of the British school from which she had graduated some seven years earlier.

Key words: Dalcroze Eurhythmics, Cecilia John, London School Dalcroze Eurhythmics, suffrage movement, Jaques-Dalcroze

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Introduction

This article acknowledges the Centenary of the establishment of the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics (LSDE) in 1913, and the work of the remarkable Cecilia John, one of seven Australians to complete the three-year course between 1917 and 1927.¹ Apart from two short visits to Australia, she lived and taught in England for the rest of her life. In 1930, the Founding Honorary Director of the LSDE, Percy Ingham, died and several years later John became the Warden, then Principal of the School, a

position she held until her death twenty-five years later. She was a dynamic figure in the Australian suffrage movement prior to 1920 yet few Dalcroze educators are aware of this part of her life.² Conversely, there is lively evidence of her Eurhythmics studies in London from 1920-1923, and involvement in international Dalcroze Eurhythmics matters, which is unknown to many Australians. Few women could match her record as a mature age student who became Principal of the British school from which she had graduated some seven years earlier.

1. Joan L. Pope, *Dalcroze Eurhythmics in Australasia: The first generation from 1918*. Unpublished thesis, Monash University, Australia, 2008).

2. Patricia Gowland, 'John, Cecilia Annie (1877-1955); *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/john-cecilia-annie-6849/text11861>, accessed 1 October 2013.

First experiences of the work of Jaques-Dalcroze in England

Mlle. Roos and Mlle. Simon who had attended his first teaching course in Geneva gave a demonstration of the new music and movement education ideas of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze with students of the St. Paul's School as early as 1907.³ The work of Kathleen Jessie O'Dowd, the first British teacher from the same course, was later glowingly reported by W. G. McNaught.⁴ Two music teachers from Moira House School, an educationally progressive school for girls, studied for several terms with Jaques-Dalcroze in Geneva and on their return, the school formulated a curriculum incorporating the spirit of his work in all studies. Girls from this school presented the results at the Royal Academy of Music in 1911.⁵ Charles Ingham, founding Principal, his wife, their daughter Gertrude, later Principal of the Moira House School, and their son and daughter-in-law, Percy and Ethel, were instrumental in furthering awareness of Jaques-Dalcroze and his method in Great Britain. This was enhanced when Jaques-Dalcroze visited England in 1912 with students from the Hellerau-Dresden College, to present public displays of his methods then called 'La Rythmique' in French, and 'Rhythmik Gymnastic' in German.⁶ The term 'Eurhythmics' had not yet applied to this study.⁷ The lecture-demonstrations were supported financially by the Ingham family and co-hosted with the Music Teachers' Association by Stewart MacPherson and Ernest

Read.⁸ Less than a year later, in September 1913, Percy Ingham founded a Centre in London to provide a preparatory year for English students who wished to attend the Jaques-Dalcroze College of Rhythm and Music at Hellerau-Dresden. As the course there was conducted in German, some proficiency in this language as well as piano skills, harmony, singing and ear-training could be gained in London prior to enrolling for the further two years of study with Jaques-Dalcroze and his staff.⁹ The outbreak of the World War I (WWI) brought the involvement of Jaques-Dalcroze with the College to an end and he returned to Geneva. Ingham then sought his permission to convert the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics into a three-year training centre that could issue qualifications in his name.¹⁰ The request was agreed to, 'until the end of the war' at which time it would be reviewed and formally accredited as a School, serving English-speaking students from the British Empire, the Dominions and Commonwealth. Although the school no longer exists, Dalcroze training in England, and elsewhere in the world, continues through qualified teachers who have the required Diplôme to train and examine at higher levels in the name of the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, Geneva.

Cecilia Annie John (1877 – 1955)

Cecilia John was born in Hobart, Tasmania in 1877, one of five children of a blacksmith of Welsh origin. As a young woman she moved to Melbourne, Victoria, in the early 1900s to study singing. The independently-minded John funded her lessons by selling eggs from her poultry farm at Deepdene.¹¹ She gained the Licentiate

3. *The Times*, December, 1907. It is noteworthy that Gustav Holst was also on the staff of this school at this time.

4. *The School Music Review*. April, 1909. McNaught was the Editor.

5. Geraldine Beare and Cynthia L. White, *Moira House: Portrait of a progressive school 1875-2000* (Eastbourne, East Sussex: Moira House School, 2000).

6. *Der Rhythmus*, 1912.

7. It was coined in the northern summer of 1911 by Professors J.J. Findlay and J. Harvey during their visit to the Dalcroze College at Hellerau with the Ingham family (*The School Music Review*. March, 1914).

8. The demonstrations were chaired in London by Tobias Matthay, and in Manchester by J. J. Finlay, Inaugural Professor of Education at Manchester University. Geraldine Beare and Cynthia L. White, *Moira House: Portrait of a progressive school 1875-2000*. Mrs J. Curwen wrote a comprehensive review in *The Musical Herald*, December, 1912.

9. Dalcroze Society of Great Britain. *A Record of the first thirty years: 1913-1943*. (London: Dalcroze Society of Great Britain, 1943).

10. Archive, Institut Jaques-Dalcroze.

11. This practical course of action became an interest she continued with considerable success, as by 1911 she was a well-known poultry judge at Agricultural Shows.

of the Associated Board (LAB), and by 1906, was a Registered Teacher with the Victorian Board of Non-Government Teachers, with 'secondary music' as her category and she taught privately at a studio in central Melbourne.¹² Possessed with a strong contralto voice, she sang with the Melbourne Metropolitan Leidertafel, the George Musgrove Opera Company and the Melbourne Philharmonic Orchestra. In conjunction with Mrs. Stewart Mackie she established the People's Conservatorium of Music in Melbourne in 1918 (ADB). In marked contrast to these activities John came to public attention as a formidable political activist and suffragette. She was the business manager for, and a contributor to *The Woman Voter* published in Melbourne, with Vida Goldstein and Adela Pankhurst. All three campaigned strongly for women's electoral rights in Victoria.¹³ John also participated in Anti-Conscription protests during WWI and she was arrested at one such rally for using her notable contralto voice 'to cause a disturbance' and was held overnight at the City Watch-house. The prosecution alleged that she had neglected to use all the means in her power to prevent the aisles being kept free of obstruction. Frank Brennan QC, for the defendant, alleged that there had been no obstruction until Councillors crowded the doorway. Miss John on the platform, he said, could hardly know that the passage outside was crowded. He questioned why the Police themselves did not act and considered the police were to blame.¹⁴ The case was adjourned. Undeterred by authority, she supported female rape victims in Courts of Law and was concerned for the welfare of children caught up in such situations. John co-founded the Women's Peace Army and the Children's Peace Army in 1914, began a Women's Refuge Farm, and was one of a small group forming a Women's Bank.

12. Victorian Public Records Office. Teacher Registration Card Index. No. 3551.

13. South Australia (SA) and Western Australia (WA) had already achieved the vote for women in 1894 and 1899 respectively.

14. *The Woman Voter*, December 13 1916, Front Page.

At the end of the Great War, John was one of the three Australian delegates attending the International Women's Peace Conference in Zurich, 1919.¹⁵ Not far away, in Geneva, Jaques-Dalcroze in 1919 presented his first International Summer Course since the war. This was a major event and attracted many former students and delegates.¹⁶ The considerable press coverage in Switzerland must have attracted John's interest and sparked a determination to pursue this approach. Returning to Melbourne and concerned with the plight of European children following WW1, she became the first Organising Secretary of the Save the Children Fund in Australia.¹⁷ In 1921 she decided to pursue Dalcroze Eurhythmics and attended the Dalcroze Summer School held at Oxford in August. Following this course she took a term of classes at the LSDE, then, giving her birth date as 1887, not 1877, on the enrolment form, joined the full-time training course.¹⁸ During the Summer School held in July 1923, at Bangor University College, North Wales, final year examinations were presided over by Jaques-Dalcroze. John was required to have one 'supplementary' and was awarded a partial certificate, on condition that in the next several years she satisfactorily completed certain teaching practise requirements under supervision. This she did over the next several years.

The wide organisational experience of this mature-age student was recognised, and by 1923 she was on the Executive Committee of the Dalcroze Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (DSGB). This had been formed by 1916, as a separate entity to the LSDE, but had not adopted a formal constitution. When, in 1922, the DSGB was working on a draft Constitution, John played a major part in the discussion and formulation of some of the wording. She proposed that one

15. Ros Pesman, *Duty Free: Australian women abroad*. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 124.

16. *Presse*, Archive, Institut Jaques-Dalcroze.

17. The organisation was founded in 1919 in London by Eglantyne Jebb. John raised many thousands of pounds for the organisation.

18. Register of Graduates, LSDE.

object should be, 'To promote in the British Empire, the teachings of eurhythmics based on the principles of Jaques-Dalcroze' which was adopted unanimously.¹⁹ The following month she moved to establish a Propaganda Sub-committee and assumed the Chair.

Percy Ingham was well aware of the problem of presenting a proper account of Dalcroze Eurhythmics in Australasia because the term 'eurhythmics' being used to describe a variety of physical education exercises and interpretative dance displays bore no relationship to the musical basis of the Eurhythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze. Ingham had two priorities, one to expand the enrolment at the LSDE and secondly to raise awareness in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.²⁰ One well-connected Australian attended the LSDE during the war years from 1915-17, namely Irene Wittenoom, daughter of Sir Edward Wittenoom of Western Australia.²¹ Two students attended in the 1921-23 period; John, from Tasmania-Victoria, and Heather Gell from South Australia. Gell was already a well-qualified kindergarten teacher and attained high marks in her final Dalcroze exams.

The LSDE promotional tour to Australasia

Ingham financially supported the proposal for a six-month promotional tour to the Commonwealth. From late October 1923 until mid-April 1924, Ethel Driver, Mistress of Method at the LSDE, was granted leave from the LSDE. Driver, who gained her Diplôme at Hellerau in 1913, was one of the most influential teachers at the LSDE having a 'crystal clear grasp' of all the aspects of the 'bones of the method', rhythmic movement, solfège, improvisation

and pedagogy.²² She was accompanied by the two recent Australian graduates, John and Gell. Lectures, demonstrations and intensive courses were given in the Australian States, with the exception of Queensland and the Northern Territory. Driver and John also made a brief visit to New Zealand. Communication with Australia was by sea-mail, with nine to ten weeks elapsing between postage and reply, and arrangements must have required considerable correspondence between London and relevant Australian cities, dealing with hotel, train reservations, venues, publicity and guest speakers. Cecilia John took an organisational role in arrangements and her personal contacts, especially in Melbourne, were of considerable assistance.

The tour was a success and much was achieved by these energetic women with limited resources at their disposal. Whilst John's brusque personality often posed problems, her zeal helped in the success. She carried copies of promotional photographs, taken in England, for distribution to the press in the cities visited and arranged press interviews in each location. The power of the press, and of women writers in the social and cultural area, was considerable. One such journalist, interviewing Driver, 'a living example of enthusiasm', and John upon their arrival in Perth, captured a lively moment when Driver, asked to give an idea of what eurhythmics were, replied that she was at a loss to sum up such a big thing in a single sentence. 'Of course you are at a loss to do so,' interjected Miss John, 'Don't try to put it in a single sentence!' Driver however, aptly summarized the aims of Dalcroze Eurhythmics as that 'by developing our sense of rhythm we develop our faculties, give them free play, and thus bring our whole being into the highest degree of efficiency.'²³ One of John's effective movement items in these public demonstrations was to an original piano

19. DSGB Minutes, January 1923.

20. These former Colonies and Dominions were regarded as 'the outposts of the British Empire' and frequently described, from Great Britain, as 'the ends of the earth.'

21. Wittenoom was a former Minister of Education in WA and a former Agent-General to London; he was the last person to be knighted by Queen Victoria in 1901.

22. Nathalie Tingey (ed.) *A Record of the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and its Graduates at Home and Overseas: 1913- 1973*. UK Dalcroze Society. London, 1973), 85.

23. *West Australian*, October 2 1923.

composition by Ann Driver, Ethel's younger sister. The struggle of Sisyphus was portrayed in strong movement and gesture by this large-framed mature lady, nevertheless the response was as if a Grecian nymph had been seen on stage.²⁴

John's report on the tour John provides a lively account. She noted that 'in Perth we were besieged by former students of Miss Wittenoom (now Mrs. Heron, in Singapore), and others, who were anxious to do further work in the method.'²⁵ She emphasises, for her English readers, the size of the country. 'We went overland across the Great Australian desert of the Nullarbor Plains, reaching Adelaide FOUR days later.' The next stop on the tour was Melbourne where John had lived for some twenty years, but even she could hardly have foreseen that a lecture-demonstration was out of the question owing to a police strike which brought about the closure of everything at 7.30 each night. Although schools and colleges were preparing to close for the long summer holidays, and it was difficult to contact people, a Summer School held in Melbourne a month later was an outstanding success.

In New South Wales (NSW), the demonstration at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music was only a few days before Christmas, and John reports that attendance was not good but 'enthusiasm made up for lack of numbers.'²⁶ Following a tactic favoured by Jaques-Dalcroze on these occasions, an audience member was requested to offer a musical theme as the basis for a piano improvisation, and Frank Hutchens obliged. Driver, writing to Jaques-Dalcroze noted that 'the musical side was particularly well presented and Mr. Hutchens, one of the foremost piano teachers of Sydney, gave a very beautiful theme which was developed at a second piano by Miss John.'²⁷

In Tasmania the 'Social Notes' recorded several 'At Homes' afforded the visitors. One, at the Lyceum Club acknowledging the role played

by John in the work of the Save the Children Fund, and another remarking that it was some years since John's 'beautiful contralto voice had charmed Hobart' and that her talent was fully recognized in the musical world.²⁸ The ten-day January Summer School in Melbourne, aroused great interest from other parts of Australia with almost eighty participants. Three from Tasmania, three from WA, ten each from NSW and SA, at least one from New Zealand, and over 50 Victorians, attended daily from 9 am until 6 pm. There was extensive newspaper coverage with John described as an 'old friend, feminist, politician, singer and entrepreneur but now an exponent of the Music of Motion.'²⁹ Professor Meredith Atkinson gave an address on Ancient Greek Dance. He was involved with Adult Education initiatives, a notable forward-thinker, holding, like John, somewhat radical social and political views. As Editor of *Stead's Review* he reprinted a thoughtful article about the principles of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze, mentioning he had interviewed 'the man himself' in Switzerland in 1922.³⁰ A number of newspaper pictures make this event one of the few in Australia to have been well documented.

John, writing to Ingham, noted that:

the Registrar of the University Conservatorium came to see me yesterday to discuss the possibility of establishing the method in the University! A Dalcroze Society was formed in Melbourne last Monday at a meeting held in our Hotel. I was in the Chair and the Meeting was splendid. Monsieur Jaques would also be happy if he could see the people of Australia so eager to learn of his work, and how indignant they are with those few people who have used the word "Eurhythmics" in connection with other things. The Vice-Regal party came to the Dem. at Melbourne and were very interested, coming on stage afterwards to speak to us.³¹

24. *Daily News* (Perth), October 26 1923.

25. *DTU Newsletter*, 1924

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Le Rythme*, December, 1924.

28. *Illustrated Tasmanian Mail*, January 17 1924.

29. *Melbourne Punch*, January 31 1924.

30. *Stead's Review*, March 23 1924.

31. John, February 2 1924. Institut Jaques-Dalcroze. Archive: English Correspondence.

Ingham could only have been well-pleased with the positive reports of the initiative in reports he was receiving from John.

John was eager to visit New Zealand (NZ) in connection with the Save the Children Fund and, through Professor (later Sir) James Shelley, a visit to the South Island provided a splendid opportunity for Dalcroze exposure as well.³² The charismatic Shelley chaired the February Demonstration and gave a lecture which Driver reported was one of the best expositions of the work she had ever heard.³³ Returning to Melbourne in early March, Driver and John gave another demonstration. From here they travelled to Adelaide where Gell had prepared the ground effectively. An impressive programme contained information about the DSGB and its distinguished membership. This demonstration, on 15 March, was chaired by Professor E. Harold Davies, of the Elder Conservatorium.³⁴ Driver and John then went to Perth by train to conduct a course in Rhythmic Movement and give a final public demonstration on 27 March. The following day they embarked on the ORMUZ. The timing was perfect as the liner berthed at Tilbury at 3pm on 25 April and term began on 28 April.³⁵

Through John's championship, four States (Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia) formed autonomous Dalcroze Societies with significant educators and musicians on the committees. Their aims included continuing contact through the London School and fund-raising to send talented students there. As a direct result of the Scholarships offered

during the tour, four young women teachers travelled to England in late 1924 and another followed within a year. The contribution of John cannot be underestimated. The participation by Directors and Superintendents of Education, distinguished professors and the high level of press coverage, was largely due to her.

John becoming increasingly involved with the Dalcroze Society and the LSDE

In London a well-attended 'At Home' organized by the Dalcroze Teachers' Union (DTU) reported the 'triumphal progress'.³⁶ An account by Driver figured in the Geneva-based publication, *Le Rythme*,³⁷ and John wrote that Australia offered 'a splendid field of work for graduates if they are moved to go so far away' stating, 'the ground has been well prepared by Miss Driver and work there should prove most interesting from every point of view'.³⁸ During John's absence a number of DSGB committee matters had been held over pending her return. These included further work on the Society's incorporation, discussions on the possible formation of a Company with Trustees, negotiations for the New Education Fellowship Conference at Wembley, personally representing Jaques-Dalcroze's involvement. The ongoing confusion between the word, 'Eurhythmy, introduced into this country by Herr Rudolph Steiner' and the Eurhythmics of Jaques-Dalcroze was of considerable concern.³⁹

John had decided to live permanently in England and she and Ethel Driver, of whom John was most protective, became inseparable companions.⁴⁰ They shared a holiday cottage in the New Forest, travelled to Geneva, and enjoyed ski-ing, 'a rhythmic recreation' as she described it

32. Since 1916, Shelley had been one of the distinguished Vice-Presidents of the DSGB, and in 1920 had been appointed to the inaugural Chair of Education at Canterbury College in Christchurch. His mentor, Prof J. J. Findlay of Manchester University, was an early proponent of Jaques-Dalcroze's work. Shelley's interest in Dalcroze Eurhythmics, formed in Manchester, and the range of activities he pursued, mark him an influential personality in NZ cultural life. Ian Carter, *The Gadfly, The Gadfly: the life and times of James Shelley*. (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993).

33. *Le Rythme*, December, 1924.

34. Davies, a respected authority on a wide range of musical and educational matters was the brother of respected composer Sir Walford Davies.

35. *The Times*, April 25 1924.

36. *Journal of DSGB*, May, 1924. Inaugural issue.

37. *Le Rythme* December, 1924.

38. *DTU Newsletter*, 1924.

39. DSGB Minutes, May 15, 1924.

40. Personal communication to author from Heather Gell (1956), Patricia James 2006, Edit Naef 2006.

to students.⁴¹ John took on more teaching work in primary schools and her name figures prominently in programmes of demonstrations of the work held throughout Great Britain. She was nominated inaugural British delegate to the new International Union of Professors [teachers] of Dalcroze (UIPD) and was elected Vice-President to Jaques-Dalcroze on its central Executive. This significant development took place during the 1925 First International Congress of Rhythm held in Geneva.⁴²

In late 1927, John made one more journey to Australia to select a Scholarship candidate to the LSDE.⁴³ The trip offered several opportunities to express herself vigorously on the values of both Dalcroze Eurhythmics and the Save the Children Fund. John welcomed interviews and declared forthrightly that Australian children were very responsive and that if eurhythmics could be taught in the State Schools, in twenty years Australia would have a musical nation. She praised the Mary Datchelor School in London where eurhythmics principles were applied to education to promote concentration, self-control and self-expression. During an interview in Hobart she highlighted her belief in the power of Dalcroze Eurhythmics to positively improve learning and behaviour with deaf and 'mentally defective' children.⁴⁴ Returning to London John assumed the international role of Organiser of the Overseas Department for the Save the Children Fund.

The death of Founding Director of the LSDE

Ingham was under considerable strain in the late 1920s, and died unexpectedly in 1930. A Committee of Management was then established to negotiate the future of the School. John was

asked to take on the role of Warden, then, several later, Honorary Principal, of the LSDE itself, a position she retained until her death in 1955. This assumption of considerable administrative responsibilities, in addition to continuing her teaching and demonstration roles, leaves no doubt that her organizational zeal assisted both the Dalcroze Society and the London School at this time. Not everyone however, was in favour of the appointment. A number of independent Dalcroze teachers, not directly associated with the LSDE, preferred to keep their distance from her, and several staff members declined to continue under her leadership. One such was the distinguished teacher, Ann Driver, who left the LSDE Staff and commenced her own London Studio of Music and Movement. In 1932, she was invited by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to pioneer broadcasts to schools on this subject.

The Society and the School desired to create a Memorial to the life and work of Percy Ingham and John was associated with the raising of funds to move the LSDE from its small home in Store Street to a better and bigger building as envisioned by Ingham. A suitable building was found in Fitzroy Square and the interior was re-designed by distinguished architect Sir Edward Maufe, a cousin of Percy Ingham's, and whose daughter had been a full-time student in the first decade of the school. John had the pleasure of seeing the building opened in 1934 but her delight was to be short-lived.

Her relationship, with the wider membership of the Dalcroze Society was not always harmonious. There was pointed dissatisfaction with the fact that she did not have the Diplôme and held only the lesser qualification then called the Teaching Certificate.⁴⁵ Another disagreement was with a matter of policy. The Central Council of Recreative Physical Training (CCRPT) was an organisation of many affiliated organisations concerned with recreation and physical fitness throughout Great

41. Diary notes, Jean Wilson of Perth WA, a student in the mid 1920s.

42. A Birthday 'purse' (a gift of money) was presented to M. Jaques by his English supporters to celebrate his 60th birthday. He declared he would use it for this inaugural Conference.

43. The candidate she selected, an accomplished student of Gell's from Adelaide, Mary Scales, did not complete the London course, transferring to Nursing studies instead. Pers. comm. Lady Melville, Canberra (1957), her sister.

44. *Register* (Adelaide), October 27 1927. The term commonly applied in those years to children with forms of intellectual delay.

45. This was later renamed the License, and recently became the Masters Degree at the Hautes Ecoles Suisse Occidentale, Geneva.

Britain. The DSGB and the LSDE had been invited to co-operate and Douglas Murray, one of the few male Dalcroze teachers and a DSGB Committee member, wrote eloquently on the advantages.

Already, after only 5 lessons the older women in the class are beginning to realise more and more clearly that the basic principles of nearly all our exercises are more suited their experiences. They prefer the shades and subtleties introduced to their minds and bodies simultaneously over the more vigorous and mainly muscular exercises that they had done. They recognise the entirely different part the use of music plays. I mean the adaptation of it as a stimulus to purely physical exercise, as compared with our conception where the music plays the more vital part as the very source of the inspiration and motive force for the movement required. Our Method DOES has something very valuable to contribute.⁴⁶

John however, had declined involvement on the grounds that the Dalcroze Method could not properly be used for the purposes of a National Fitness Campaign, a view which she subsequently expressed at the Annual General Meeting. The Council of the Dalcroze Society, at its next meeting, pointedly regretted John's decisions, dissented from her views and approved the course undertaken by the Executive to participate in some appropriate way.⁴⁷

John must have been under considerable pressure as she relinquished her twenty year involvement with the Save the Children Fund. She had served the past eight years as honorary Organiser of the Overseas Department. Its committee expressed its regret at her departure and applauded the work she achieved in 'the Colonies and Dominions where her visits and regular correspondence maintained a very high level and done in such a generous spirit that her departure will be deeply felt everywhere.'⁴⁸

Further tensions between John and the Society arose regarding the ability of the Society to give demonstrations of the work. John insisted that such demonstrations were the function of the School and should be under its direct supervision. By 1938, this tension resulted in the following motion:

We feel ourselves unable to relinquish our freedom to give demonstrations because that would destroy half the objects of the Society; but we are always anxious to co-operate with the School at every point. The details of such co-operation shall be discussed again in the near future.⁴⁹

Perhaps seeking to make amends, or perhaps to re-emphasise her attitude, John, in 1938, wrote to the Society proposing that the LSDE was intending to hold a Reception and invitations would be sent, and pointedly seeking to establish who would permit whose address be used. The Society replied helpfully and asked, for convenience of members' travel, if Miss John would allow the Society's AGM to be held at that time.⁵⁰ At the November meeting John presented her resignation from the Committee. In 1939 the question of amalgamation of the Dalcroze Teachers' Union and the Dalcroze Society was raised; the Society reluctantly suspended publication of its *Journal*; and in September a Council Meeting was called to discuss the continuation or the closure of the Dalcroze School. However, members of the Council were necessarily concerned with their private difficulties occasioned by WWII that the meeting was only attended by those in the School. Life in London grew increasingly difficult for the LSDE staff and students and nearly all volunteered for organisations such as the War Office, Ambulance Service, Searchlight Duties, Women's Auxiliary and the inaugural Meals on Wheels.

46. DSGB, Report, 1938.

47. DSGB Minutes, 1937.

48. *The World's Children*, 1937, reprinted in *Le Rhythme*, October-December, 1955.

49. DSGB Minutes, 1938.

50. DSGB October 1938.

Wartime in London

When bombs fell in London in 1940, the LSDE in Fitzroy Square was damaged and later destroyed. Although some records had been distributed to member's houses for safe keeping, many were lost when the building was hit. It was a traumatic experience for it had been the home of the School, the Teachers' Union and the Society for less than eight years. With the School no longer at Fitzroy Square it was necessary to have an address and the studio address of Ernest Read, the Chairman, was made available, but that building too was totally destroyed in enemy action in 1941. The Minutes of the School, the Society and Teacher's Union ceased being formal documents and those now held in the Dalcroze Archive at the National Resource Centre for Dance (NRCD) are simple pencil notes recording briefly who is where, and what is being done.

John had initiated emergency plans for the small number of students in the Training Course. In late 1939 she arranged temporary quarters in a former girls' boarding school at Glassenbury Park, near Cranbrook in Kent, then in Staffordshire at Kibblestone Hall. As one of the few who had a large vehicle, albeit fitted with a gas-producer, John made many trips transporting equipment and belongings. A former colleague mentioned that few students or staff, other than Ethel Driver, chose to travel with her.⁵¹ Writing to Winifred Houghton of the DTU committee in London, John informed her that:

Mr Read gave us, so far as he was concerned, carte blanche to do the best we could in the circumstances. At Glassenbury we had, as Staff, Barbara Kenyon and Harold Craxton, Mr. F.J. Stone; now here we have Mr. Wesale, City organist of Stoke-on-Trent, with Ruth Tyson and Iris Greep until her marriage (now Mrs. du Pre) and Kitta Brown until she went to America. We have been able to keep the school going by 'cutting our coat according to our cloth' and by Miss Weber and myself without any salary or remuneration of any kind, and the rest of the staff accepting a nominal fee or honorarium. We have

*paid into the Ingham Memorial House account any donations and also the sum of money paid by the Insurance Company as compensation for the destruction of the school by fire, and of printed matter belonging to the School.*⁵²

Several years later John arranged a lease of a large mansion at Milland Place, near Liphook in Surrey. This splendid venue was opened as the new LSDE by Lady Atlee in 1946.

American student, Jane Bradley drew a striking vignette of the Principal around this time:

*John was a Wagnerian figure of awe-inspiring proportions and directed the school with a firm hand. We were all afraid of her, with good cause. She wore serious suits of heavy cloth and had her hair curled in tight steely rows. Cecilia was the terror of the Country Fairs. It was said she could knock down coconuts until stall holders asked her to leave. I know for a fact that she owned a rifle. She would take it out and shoot foxes from the balcony outside her room. She had the most beautiful suite in the college but did not sleep well and would fire away in the half light of early dawn. Once some students went in a deputation to John because they had found snares set to catch rabbits along edge of the drive. They were shocked to learn she had ordered them set to catch rabbits to supplement the college meals, or to sell.*⁵³

Tensions again arose between John and those qualified teachers needed to staff the School who remained living in or near London, as the journey down by train was time-consuming and involved an overnight stay, which was difficult for teachers with families and other part-time teaching commitments. As a result, by 1949, a group determined to open a London Training Centre in Newton Road, Bayswater, to allow students who did not wish to enter the LSDE as residential boarders, to continue their course. Two sets of staff, students and administration, although all were acting as they felt 'for the best', did not make for an easy liaison, and a considerable amount of jealousy, distrust and suspicion appeared beneath, and at times above, the surface. Sincere

52. August 1942.

53. *American Dalcroze Journal*, Summer, 1997, 10-12.

51. Elizabeth Strong, *Pers. Com.*, 2006.

and reasonable differences of opinion easily turned into sharp conflict.

Further difficulties beset the School, the Society and Cecilia John

The Society's correspondence files of the late-1940s contain a number of letters reporting diverse difficulties. The school had an overdraft; there were still difficulties with Lloyds, for whom Ingham had worked, which affected the release of funds nearly twenty years after his death, and problems concerning a possible £8,000 Insurance claim on war-damaged buildings. There were legal difficulties in releasing the moieties of a legacy that Ingham had bequeathed to Jaques-Dalcroze and other beneficiaries. Jaques-Dalcroze was now in poor health and said to be distressed and it was vital to get funds to him. It was a deeply upsetting time for all concerned. Helen Read, Honorary Secretary of the Dalcroze Society, composed an open letter about the need for unity and posed the question of what would happen to the future of the Training School should anything happen to the present head, Miss John. She raised the suggestion that the Society could take over the responsibility and appoint a Management committee and Principal. Jaques-Dalcroze died in Geneva in 1950, on the eve of his eighty-fifth birthday and John attended the funeral service and later participated in the funeral memorial service arranged in London.

Merle Walkington, from Adelaide was a residential student at Milland Place in the early 1950s.⁵⁴ Although Australians had experienced food rationing during and after the war, nothing quite prepared her for the lean time she had in England. There was little heating and students resorted to warming a mug of Milo, condensed milk and water over a single bar radiator, and eating very poorly. Nevertheless, she recalls 'Cecilia at the head of the table carving the minuscule piece of roast meat for a Sunday

dinner', and notes that John did most of the cooking at the College, producing meals from the garden and poultry house she tended with the assistance of a groundsman. Walkington remembered that John had a very large Shepherd's Crook which she would bang on the ceiling to attract the attention of Miss Driver in the room above hers. John suffered from arthritis which badly affected her knees. She agreed in the summer of 1955, to spend several weeks in hospital for heat therapy, but whilst there suffered a fall from which she did not recover. She died aged 78.⁵⁵

After Cecilia's death, Ernest Read, Chairman of the Dalcroze Society, wrote a Memo regarding the closure of the Milland Place School. He reported an amicable meeting with Ethel Driver and Alice Weber and confirmed that John had set up a company called 'The Property Company' in the names of Miss Weber and herself, and that Miss Driver had now agreed with arrangement to take that place, and that Milland Place was up for sale. He assured the committee that:

there were no legal liabilities and they desired to have the Society assume control of the School and students. They will notify the Ministry of Education they are closing and transferring students and goodwill to us. We, (the Society), will notify parents and inform them of accommodation in London for the Newton Road Dalcroze Training Centre.⁵⁶

Read continued the arduous task of sorting the financial obligations of the past decades of the LSDE.

Long-time legal adviser to the Society, Hubert Oppenheimer, suggested changing the wording 'under the supervision of Ethel Driver' in Read's Memo, to 'with the co-operation of Miss Ethel Driver' adding 'even the most touchy Diplômée

54. Walkington was a qualified Kindergarten teacher and a student of Heather Gell.

55. These details are revealed in letters to another of Gell's students, Lady Mary Champion de Crespigny (nee Jolley) from Driver. De Crespigny had spent some time studying at Milland Place in 1950 but returned to Adelaide before graduating. She had struck up a friendship with Driver and they corresponded until Driver's death in 1965.

56. July 1955.

can have no objection to working with Ethel! He noted that it seemed impossible that the parties who signed the 1931 Deed should merely have imagined the execution of a Deed of Transfer from the Public Trustee and felt some difficulty in formulating a scheme of amalgamation without knowing the terms of the transfer. Referring no doubt to Misses John and Driver, he regretted that 'in those days those concerned troubled a great deal more about the artistic side than the legal side of the matter'. Indeed, expanding on this he commented 'the legal position of the wonderful London School is like Alice in Wonderland'.⁵⁷

*As regards the use of the name of the Dalcroze School, I have some apprehension of giving the impression that the Society and the School have been consolidated and that thereby the Society is liable for the School's liabilities. The possibility is remote but I want you to be ultra-careful just because I have an uncomfortable feeling that during the time when a certain gentleman of doubtful probity was John's confidential man, all sorts of undisclosed liabilities may have been incurred.*⁵⁸

It is not known to whom this refers but the implication that Cecilia John had been unfortunate in her choice of adviser seems clear.

An obituary written by Nathalie Tingey was generous:

One cannot adequately salute the efforts made by Cecilia during and after the war to keep the flag of

*the Method flying. It is always difficult to assume a predecessor's mantle and for Cecilia it created special difficulties as her personality could not have been more different from Mr Ingham's. Both of them had boundless tenacity and courage and both aimed at the same objective; whereas Percy, the gentlest of men, achieved these through quiet and tactful persuasion, Cecilia pursued them with bulldozer tactics and a constitutional inability to compromise. But the hardship and exigencies of war time were so great that it is doubtful whether a less strenuous approach could have coped with them.*⁵⁹

Later, the sister of Jaques-Dalcroze commented that John did not have many friends 'because people were sometimes repulsed by a brusqueness and a somewhat dictatorial attitude in her relationship with them ... [but] what a heart full of devotion to the memory of Percy Ingham and Jaques-Dalcroze'.⁶⁰

John never married and devoted herself to the furtherance of the work of Jaques-Dalcroze whom she often referred to as 'the Master'. The term may sound somewhat excessive to contemporary ears and imply a degree of submissive discipleship. This, however, was hardly the style of Cecilia Annie John, and may simply be her preferred translation of the courtesy form of address, '*le Maître*'... which after all, he was; he was the master of his school and of the unique teaching method he developed.

57. September 15 1955; Oppenheimer-Carter. Correspondence file, NRCD.

58. *Ibid.*

59. Nathalie Tingey (ed.) *A Record of the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and its Graduates at Home and Overseas: 1913- 1973*, 87.

60. *Le Rythme*, 1956. Mme. Hélène Brunet-Lecomte was the only sister of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze.

Dr Joan Pope OAM is an internationally recognised expert in Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Joan completed her PhD at Monash University in 2008. Her thesis researched the spread of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and the efforts by a number of women to advance the approach in Australia in the 1920s. Joan's insightful and meticulous work has been awarded the biennial Callaway Doctoral Award by the Australian Society for Music Education. Joan is a well-known and very distinguished teacher and researcher who has already published a number of scholarly works in the field. She has received the Centenary of Federation Medal (2003), an Order of Australia Medal (2001), an Edith Cowan Fellowship (1984), and an Inaugural Australia Council Community Arts Fellowship (1980). She has taught in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions across Australian, at schools and conferences in Australia, England, Dresden, Nagoya, Bangkok, Singapore, Taiwan and Suva.