A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DALCROZE, KODALY AND SUZUKI METHODS WITH A VIEW TO MAXIMIZING DYSLEXIC SINGERS' SELF-REGULATING STRATEGIES WHEN REHEARSING AND PERFORMING A CLASSICAL PIECE.

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An investigation was undertaken on an intervention to facilitate reading and recalling notated musical rhythms in classical singers with dyslexia.

Traditional methods of teaching music do not accommodate the neurodiversity of dyslexic learners nor deficits in visual and auditory coding and decoding, short term memory and processing. This study addresses the paucity within tertiary music education. Three aims were explored: 1. Whether and how rhythm deficits manifest themselves within dyslexic singers' self-regulated rehearsals 2. What musical identities the singers with dyslexia have and how these impact on musical development. 3. Can a sensory-motor tool be newly designed and implemented specifically for this group and what are the implications. The researcher designed the Reid Rhythm Hand Cards (RRHC). Materials integrate the concepts of flash cards, multisensory learning and embodied cognition to support memory recall, coding and decoding of musical notation, aiding autonomous reading and performance of rhythm patterns. The results indicated that a sub group within the population of those with dyslexia have a deficit in reading, recalling and performing rhythmic patterns and this impacts on the singer's ability to learn and manipulate new material quickly while working in an autonomous fashion. The musical identities of the singers were not associated publically with dyslexia as non-disclosure was a cultural norm within competitive UK conservatoire environments. This non-disclosure to key individuals such as conductors, directors and singing teachers has led to a disclosed lack of specific support within musical training for these singers. The impact on music development is evident with documented maladaptive behaviours, anxiety and avoidance of skills such as reading music and learning new material quickly and autonomously. The intervention to aid the singers with reading music rhythm patterns was introduced successfully and pre and post intervention test scores demonstrated small increases in rhythm reading scores. The major findings relate to the participants change in attitudes of readiness to learn and continue their rhythmic studies. The singers described an elevation of fear and a boosting of confidence when practicing rhythms autonomously. Results indicate strong potential for this intervention to benefit the musical development of singers with dyslexia. Further investigations over an extended period with a larger sample at a younger developmental stage would allow the intervention to be assimilated slowly, to develop motor skills at an age where reading music commences and students have more time. Changes in culture and policy at conservatoires, in teaching methods, support and attitudes to reflect a neurodiversity approach need to be implemented. Dyslexia needs to be fully defined with its relationship to learners of music which would facilitate disclosure and help-seeking and widen access to support professional singing careers.

Dr Ailie Reid is a professional soprano, vocal coach and researcher from the UK. She graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music and has toured with operetta companies, sung for the Norwegian Royal Family and has taught in Norway and Scotland for several years. She is a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellow and was awarded finances to travel to engage with alternative music practices investigating their potential to aid classical singers with dyslexia. Methods included: Dalcroze, Kodaly, Suzuki, Orff and the Gordon Music theory, in; Hungary, Finland, Japan, Switzerland and the USA. She has just recently been awarded a doctorate from the Reid School of Music, The University of Edinburgh, and is now looking to continue further collaborative research projects to support singers with dyslexia.