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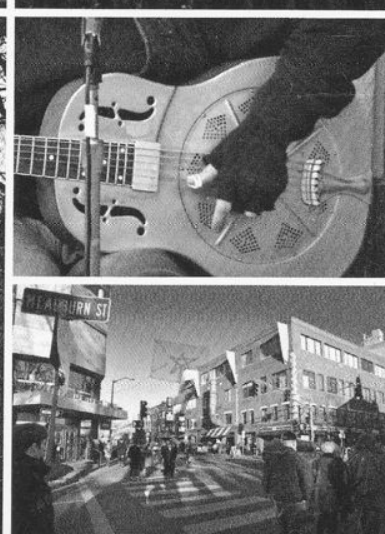
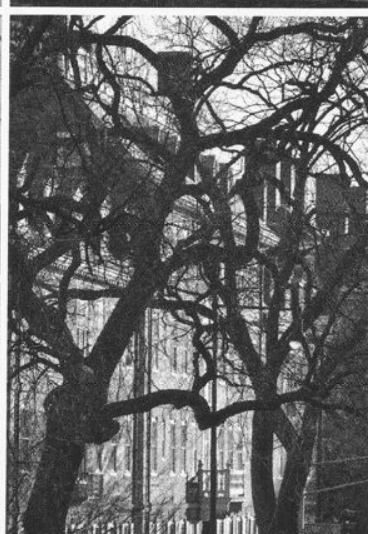
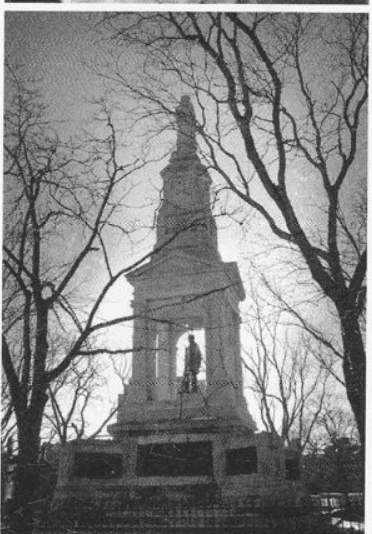
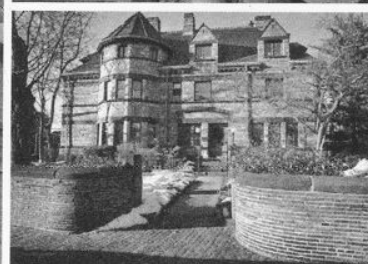
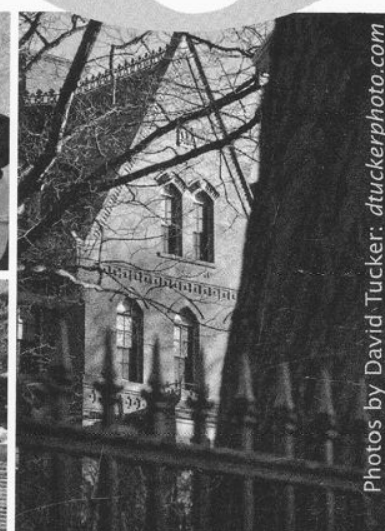
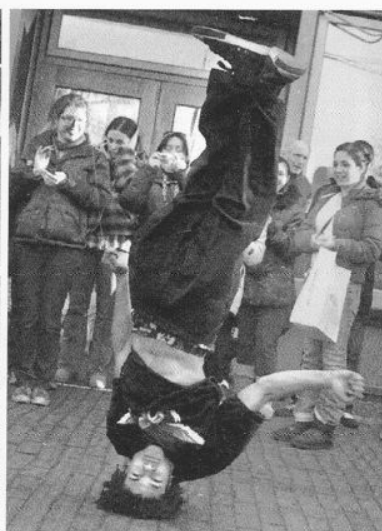
Reviewed by  
Terry Boyarsky

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# Book Review: Reaching Out – A Musician's Guide to Interactive Performance by David Wallace

Reviewed by Terry Boyarsky



Terry Boyarsky

It was with great interest and appreciation that I read David Wallace's book, "Reaching Out – A Musician's Guide to Interactive Performance" (published in 2008 by McGraw-Hill). David Wallace, on the faculty of the Juilliard School and a Senior Teaching Artist at the New York Philharmonic, is a classical violist, fiddler, composer and writer. His

book is well-written, practical and engaging. Although he is not a Dalcroze teacher, Wallace has made it his mission to discover ways for listeners to stay connected to the music during a performance. His book provides intriguing insights into his own (and others') experiments with actively engaging an audience during a musical performance.

The book is timely for me as a performer and teaching artist, and I think it speaks to the necessary changes taking place in the classical music world. In the past, conductors only made contact with the audience for a bow and otherwise maintained silence and distance. Today we are likely to see conductors turning around to address the audience more than once during a concert. There are many ensembles experimenting with audience involvement, as well as musicians who offer new, innovative, participatory programs for young audiences. Wallace writes, "Interaction can deepen the level of engagement of sophisticated audiences, broaden the appeal to make newcomers feel successful, and engage diverse audiences through universal effectiveness of hands-on understanding. . . . We cannot depend on others to build relationships between us and our audiences. To build these relationships we must interact; we must reach out." (p. 69)

As a teaching artist trained in arts integration, I have been called on to work with children as well as their teachers. We plan units together, I offer professional development. The question for me is always how to engage participants in a meaningful experience that can lead to intensifying the dialogue. As a presenter, performer and educator, I find the same values I uphold in the Dalcroze class hold true in

larger venues: responsiveness, respect, collaboration, building sequentially, artistically satisfying experiences, active learning, musical as well as personal connection, humor. Wallace discusses six principles for interactive performance, giving anecdotal evidence to illustrate each. It is gratifying to read comments such as, "Unless information is grounded in an actual experience, it seldom helps a listener's ears."

Designing an interactive concert is reminiscent of creating a Dalcroze lesson, although Wallace goes a step further to suggest that you work with colleagues. He leads the reader through four stages: 1) brainstorming a theme with repertoire that will support it (for example, "Music Your Parents Would Hate"); 2) designing activities that go with the music and theme; 3) scripting and rehearsing; and 4) assessing the performance. This cycle makes terrific sense - every class and every performance grows and deepens the more one can let reflection inform the planning.

I especially appreciate Wallace's kaleidoscopic view. He suggests listening to your chosen repertoire from three different angles: first, for pleasure, second, as if you were an audience member hearing it for the first time, and third, with your analytical mind as a trained musician. In this way, you can generate entry points for your inevitably "multiple intelligence" audience members.

The book is practical, nicely laid out visually, with photographs and sidebars containing checklists, questions to work with, reminders, and ideas to consider. He reminds readers that fun, inquiry-based activities still need to support the chosen theme of the concert. He suggests that your script "allow room for flexibility, spontaneity, and audience response."

Wallace devotes large sections of the book to describing actual programs, then deconstructs them to see what worked well and what was less effective. The chapter entitled "Avoiding Ten Common Pitfalls" supports the essential goals of how to connect the listener to the music from the other way around, and we can see reflections of our own process here. He discusses how to get the audience "strategically and intentionally" connected to the music. "Purely musical use of entry points enables the audience to listen



actively like a musician. Intellectual or metaphorical use of entry points helps to universalize and demystify musical concepts. Personal, emotional aspects of entry points allow listeners to establish individual connections with the work." (p. 24)

Reaching Out contains suggestions for ways you can improvise with your audience. For example, "in a piece simulation, you and your audience create or perform something analogous to the music they are about to hear." Dalcrozians will find his ideas reminiscent of our own teaching and improvising process. Of course, when you do these kinds of performances, the activities take up time. I personally can attest to the fact that I just don't have time to play all the pieces I want to. I've begun to trade quantity of repertoire for quality of audience responsiveness. It's worth it because participants feel more fulfilled and remember the music better.

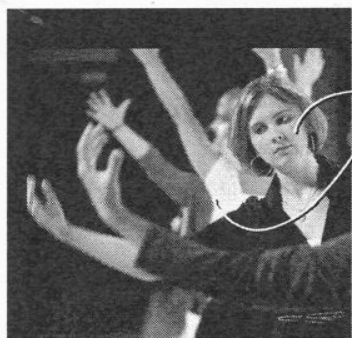
Wallace discusses pre-concert workshops as well as week-long residencies. There are suggestions for how to find grants and examples of how to develop long term relationships with a community. The three appendices are quite helpful. The first contains five transcripts from interactive concerts; the second is a checklist which is helpful for self-assessment and reflection; the third is an annotated bibliography.

Wallace feels that "we should model a life of ongoing inquiry and musical curiosity for our fellow musicians" (p. 58). He continually adds new dimensions and layers as his book develops. He reminds us educators and performers that presentation of music inevitably implies a larger, theatrical perspective. He encourages us to consider stage elements too - drama, surprise, visuals, entrances, and good speaking. This book is so packed with creative suggestions, anecdotal evidence, and reflective questions that it will stimulate many sides of your musical self. It will give you a new look at your own process, be it teaching, performing, conducting, collaborating or listening.

*With over 35 years of experience as a teacher of Dalcroze Eurhythmics and a life long performer of chamber music, Terry Boyarsky specializes in integrating music and movement into the curriculum. In her unique, multifaceted approach, Terry evokes deep listening and playful experimentation. Students work together to understand the components of rhythm and sound, to develop attention, improve coordination, and challenge the mind.*

In 1998, Terry earned an M.A. in Ethnomusicology from Kent State University and has been listed in "Who's Who" since 2000. Two of her recent articles are "A Round is a Circle (a practical meditation on the learning resonance of circles, rounds and music)" published in Teaching Artist Journal, and "Dalcroze Eurhythmics and the Quick Reaction Exercises" published in the Orff Echo.

Terry is a frequent presenter at national conferences and is a teaching artist with the Kennedy Center's Ohio State-Based Collaborative Initiative. She sings in the Cleveland Orchestra Blossom Festival Chorus, Choral Arts Society and is on the rosters of Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio and the Ohio Arts Council. She performs as "Russian Duo" with Siberian balalaika virtuoso, Oleg Kruglyakov ([www.russianduo.com](http://www.russianduo.com)).



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