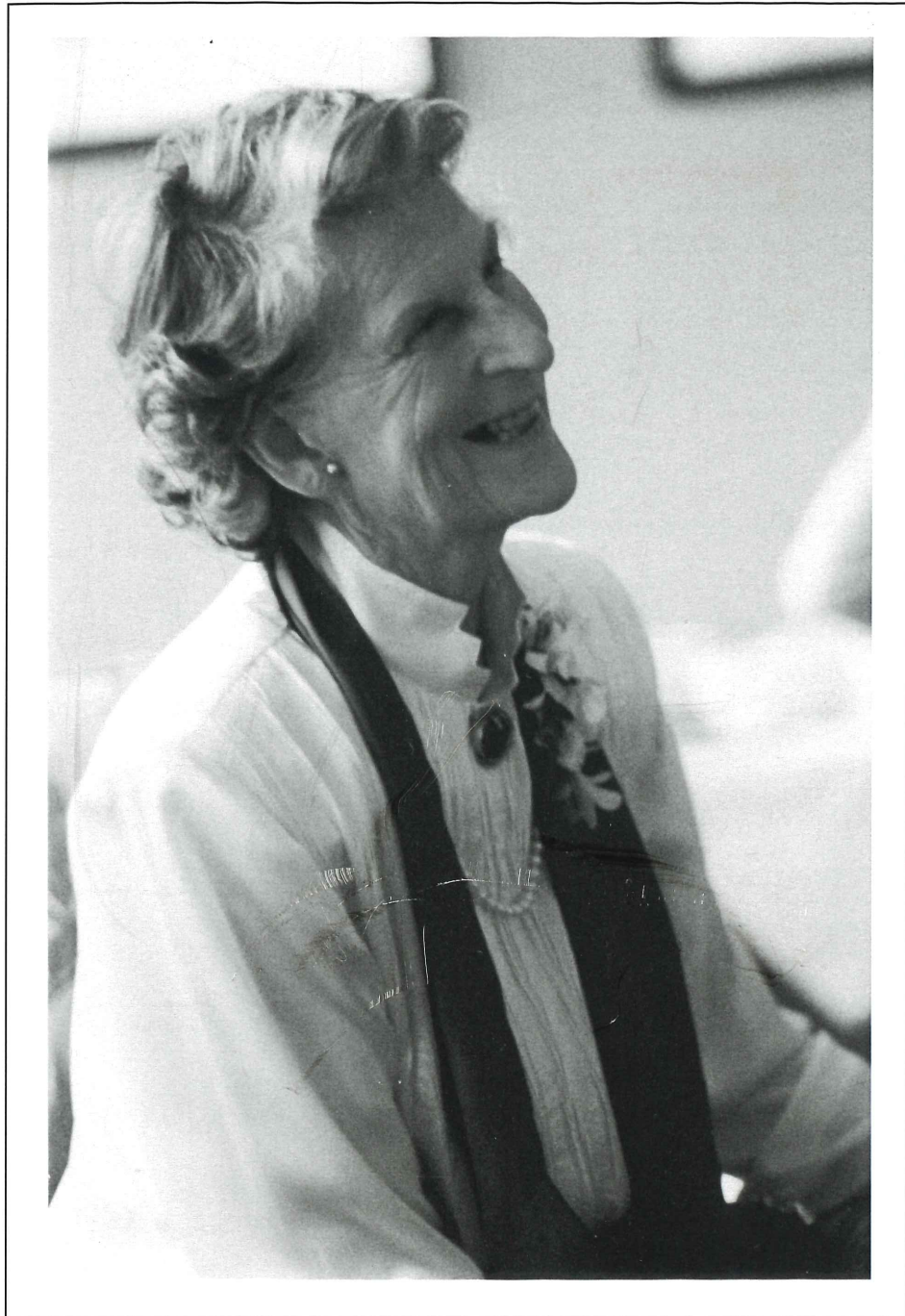


ELIZABETH VANDERSPAR



*A Great Dalcrozian
Remembered*

ELIZABETH VANDERSPAR

1921-2009

Early on the morning of 2nd May, 2009, shortly before her 86th birthday, Elizabeth Vanderspar peacefully departed this life. The sad news was announced and soon messages and tributes were flooding in from all parts of the world: America, Canada, Australia, Japan, Israel, Europe, UK ... The influence of her teaching Dalcroze Eurhythmics over a period of forty-seven years had spread worldwide inspiring three generations of students and teachers.

Mary Elizabeth de Lorentz Young was born 26th May, 1921, into an army family in Camberley, Surrey. During most of her childhood her parents were in India, so she was educated in residential schools spending the holidays with her aunts. She missed her parents very much. From her earliest years she enjoyed playing the piano by ear and improvising stories for which she was often reproved for "strumming" instead of practising: "I thought you were musical, Elizabeth!" she was told.

In 1928, she was introduced to Dalcroze Eurhythmics through Valerie Churchill, a cousin of Ena Churchill who was also a Dalcroze Graduate. Both were former pupils of Moira House School in Eastbourne, Sussex, where Dalcroze was first introduced in this country and where Jaques-Dalcroze himself visited in 1912 and 1913, travelling throughout Britain giving Dalcroze demonstrations with the Moira House girls. Elizabeth's senior school was more narrow and conventional, but she had piano and violin lessons, played in the orchestra, sang solos in the choir and greatly enjoyed classes in 'Revived Greek Dance' with Nancy Sherwood, one of the top performers and teachers in the country. This dance method was an ideal movement training for Dalcroze work as it was based on agogic and dynamic variations of walking, running and skipping, and body mobility, very systematically taught.



Elizabeth when she was 'Young'

Aged fifteen, Elizabeth became seriously ill with pneumonia and had to leave school. Then, in 1938, after seeing a Dalcroze Demonstration given by Joan Bottard, she went to Geneva for six months to learn French. While there, she visited the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze and joined