



Newsletter

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D-I-T-T moves to music

at a St. Valentine's Day Benefit Concert 'Hearts, Flowers and All That Jazz' in the Gothic splendour of the Hôtel de Ville, Brussels.



Tenor Teun Michiels and lyricist Nina Andersson

What an honour! D-I-T-T has a song all of its own! Our warmest thanks to Nina Andersson for her care in writing the libretto to 'How do you spell dyslexia', to Teun who set the words to music, and to Stephan Beerens, prize-winning soloist, who gave the D-I-T-T song its debut at the opening of the evening of 14 February on the theme of love. You can hear Nina's song for D-I-T-T, read by Alastair Daniel, here:
<http://www.ditt-online.org/Archives/NinasSong.mp3>

Musicians, actors, helpers and supporters all gave their time and talents to put on a programme originally organized by Cesar Delgado, devised and produced by Jacqueline Midgley assisted by scenographer Kirsten Bell, and compered by D·I·T·T Board Member and media expert Christopher James Ian.



Above: Teun Michiels

Left – from left to right:
Alic Merlivat, Paulina Van Rijn and Hugh Terlinden

D·I·T·T Special Events Co-ordinator Paulina Van Rijn, together with Hugh Terlinden and Alic Merlivat, supported the event which featured a parade of talented young celebrities including **Teun Michiels**. Teun won the first prize with distinction at the Royal Conservatory of Liège in singing both opera and chamber music. He is also a graduate of the world-famous Carillon school 'Jef Denyn' in Machelen, and has travelled throughout Europe giving singing and carillon recitals.



Ruth Miura

Ruth Muira was born in the United States, gained her Bachelor of Music from the University of Southern California, and graduated from the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto, Japan as a Suzuki teacher.

She is living and working in Brussels as pianist and Suzuki piano teacher and as a Suzuki teacher trainer for the European Suzuki Association. She also works with teachers and children in various countries including France, Finland, Lithuania and Spain.

Ruth is currently studying with Monique Deschaussées in Paris.

Jazz flautist and pianist duo **Jeremy Chapman** and **Dan Whieldon** met at the Birmingham Conservatory in 2002 and for over a year played twice a week in a local bar.

With great attention to sound and space in their improvising, which is influenced in part by their background in classical music, these two talented musicians have developed a highly intuitive approach to jazz improvisation – original compositions as well as their own arrangements of jazz standards.



Aleksandra
Kwasniewska

Singer **Aleksandra Kwasniewska** is a student of Herlinde Ghekiere at the Jazz Department of the *Muziekacademie* in Ghent. She combines modern jazz harmonies with traditional Polish folk melodies – but her greatest love is the jazz standards.

She was accompanied by **Peter Ryckeboer** who studied jazz and piano at the Conservatory in Ghent and is currently pianist for several celebrated bands, playing at festivals and the 'Brussels Jazz Marathon'. He teaches music in Geraardsbergen, Waregem, Aarschot and Diest.

John Snauwaert, saxophonist and composer, wrote music for the cartoon 'Papa Trompet' by Evelyn Verschoose and the music score for 'Het Bed' by Luc Degryse which will be released in 2005.

He is the leader of a Jazz Quintet and a composer. In 2004 he started a group called 'Bielawa' with Aleksandra Kwasniewska where he combines Polish traditional melodies with modern jazz elements.

Koen Kimpe is bass player with several well-known bands. He will graduate from the Conservatory in Ghent this year. He teaches bass in Tielt, Geraardsbergen and Beveren.

The renowned and well-loved Belgian guitarist **Francis Goya** was born of musician parents in the city of Liège. He went straight to the top of the charts with his first single 'Nostalgia', and has recorded forty albums – most of which became gold or platinum – and has made two highly successful world tours.



Francis Goya

Carolyn Walker, **Tim Mawson** and **Alastair Daniel** recited poetry and excerpts from 'Exchange of letters' by Wendy Cope, 'Sonnet from the Portuguese XLIII' by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat' by Lewis Carroll, and letters from Bonaparte to Josephine, Chopin to Delphine Potocka and from Gustave Flaubert to Louise Colet, and, finally, from *Our hearts* by Guy de Maupassant.



Tim Mawson

British born **Tim Mawson** has performed with English-speaking theatrical groups in Brussels for the past 30 years, covering a broad range of theatrical genres including comedy, classical, Shakespeare, suspense and pantomime.

Alastair Daniel founded The Story Tent, an educational resource encouraging literacy and oracy skills through the telling of stories. He travels between Belgium and the UK working as a professional storyteller which brings him into contact with approximately 20,000 young people a year.

He recently took up a post lecturing in the School of Education at Kingston, England, and in the next twelve months hopes to complete his doctoral studies on the theory of ritual. He is himself dyslexic.

Telephone or Fax: +44 (0)870 241 5857

E-mail: enquiry@storytent.co.uk



Alastair Daniel's Story Tent

Music and Dyslexia

How dyslexia can affect musicians – how music can help

The same conventions that make reading words difficult can also apply to reading music. Music is a form of language, so students with dyslexic difficulties can have problems with how music is written, just as much as with conventional reading and writing.

In particular, the conventions of musical notation and how they relate to techniques for playing musical instruments may cause specific difficulties. This is especially true if there is a tendency to misread them, and if spatial and sequence inter-relationships between the music, musical notation, and instrumental technique are complex. A series of difficulties is identified, and response strategies reviewed.

Finally, it is argued that music in itself can be helpful to students with dyslexic difficulties. It is therefore doubly important to illuminate music teaching with ways to solve potential difficulties so that dyslexic students too can confidently reap the benefits of music – including the 'Mozart effect'.

The importance of this is beginning to be understood and acted upon in music education.

Abstract by Special Education consultant, Susan Wrigglesworth
See <http://www.ditt-online.org/Archives/MusicandDyslexia.doc> for the full article.

Profiles



José Morais

José Morais

José Morais, professor of Cognitive Psycholinguistics and co-director of the Research Unit in Cognitive Neuroscience at the *Université Libre de Bruxelles* and a member of the Scientific Committee of the French *Observatoire National de la Lecture*.

He is the seventh expert to join the D·I·T·T Scientific Advisory Committee.

Spielberg – an iconic dyslexic

Film maker Steven Spielberg didn't have it easy at school in Phoenix, Arizona. He not only had to cope with racial discrimination, being the only Jew in his class, but also with his dyslexia.

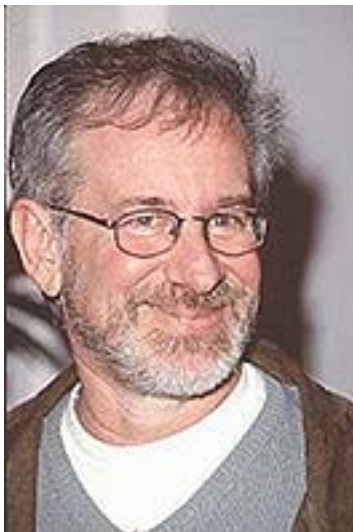
He showed little enthusiasm for his studies; his grades were only average. It is perhaps not surprising then that many of his films show kids in some form of distress.

On leaving school Spielberg had to put up with disappointment in Higher Education. He was turned down twice for the University of Southern California's prestigious film course, despite having made films since the age of 12. Fortunately, and ironically, it was due to his learning problems that he went on to study English at California State University where he could also study cinema.

Spielberg is only one of the many Hollywood household names who are dyslexic, who include Tom Cruise, Whoopi Goldberg, Sylvester Stallone and Harrison Ford. They are living proof of the ability of dyslexics to be multi-dimensional high-speed thinkers, being often intuitive, visual and highly creative.

Spielberg's affinity with images and pictures rather than with the written word will be once more brought to the fore in one of his forthcoming projects. For over 20 years he has been interested in bringing Hergé's Tintin to the big screen, and it now seems that things are moving forward. The movie grapevine reports that casting is already in progress. So, watch out next year for Tintin the movie. A big-screen Tintin success will certainly give a boost to D·I·T·T's special *Tintin helps dyslexic learners* CD-ROM.

Tim Mawson



Stephen Spielberg

'... an alien. I always felt like I never belonged to any group that I wanted to belong to'

What works

Thinking audio

www.audiobooksforfree.com – Register with this site and download free audio books at minimal cost.

www.findsounds.com – Find and listen to the sound of footsteps in the snow or the sound of the nightingale.

Stop press!

Marlene Merlivat is bringing out her own teaching method for young French learners who have to cope with dyslexia: French learn-to-read materials – an exciting proven method that responds to all the criteria below (taken from JGC/WINWORD/SPLEDF.DOC)

Where basic steps in being able to read and write are seriously affected by specific learning difficulties due to weaknesses in short-term auditory memory and short-term visual memory it is suggested that these be remedied by:

- intensive and structured revision in phonic analysis with particular reference to phoneme-grapheme correspondence and blending and spelling rules
- training in memory and sequencing skills both visual and audio/verbal
- regular practice at information processing tasks at speed in order to encourage an increase in the rate of information processing
- the structured teaching and practice of spelling as part of the daily curriculum.

Extra learning could take place at home – the book *Spelling it Out* by R. Pratley (BBC publications) would be suitable.

Less emphasis should be placed on the presentation of written work as this will improve as competence at spelling with confidence grows.

Teaching programmes should not only be carefully structured and graded, but must also embody a high degree of over-learning in order to circumvent memory difficulties.

In spelling for example, without such overlearning, it is impossible to develop the automaticity of word reproduction which is necessary to be able to spell

fluently whilst simultaneously holding on to the overall meaning of the piece being written.

It is very important that a carefully structured approach to phonics be adopted, with extensive use of multi-sensory techniques so that the visual, auditory and kinesthetic inputs are used to best effect.

The aim is for the pupil to develop permanent automatic responses to the shapes of letters and combinations of letters and thus build up fluency in combining these into their correct sequences of words.

Daily practice is needed and should be provided through home and school – about 10 minutes per day'

Marlene writes:

*'Lire est d'Argent,
écrire est d'Or.'*

*'Adapter le programme
à l'enfant.'*

*'Faiblesse du langage écrit
ou Dyslexie.
Risque d'échec scolaire ?'*

Nous constatons aujourd'hui fréquemment, que les enfants ont de plus en plus de difficultés à s'approprier une image de la langue. Voici une méthode d'apprentissage de la lecture selon le modèle phonologique de l'alphabet par l'épellation des lettres et des sons : a, bé, cé.

Elle apporte une solution alternative à l'enseignement tel qu'il est prodigué aujourd'hui.

Elle présente une aide précieuse aux parents éprouvant un sentiment marquant d'isolement en regard de ce qu'est réellement la difficulté scolaire (la dyslexie)

La dyslexie empêche l'automatisme par lequel l'enfant devrait immédiatement déchiffrer ce qu'il lit. L'enfant hésite, il a besoin de réfléchir pour associer des lettres avec des sons. C'est cette réflexion sur le langage écrit que nous visons à automatiser, de façon à ce que l'élève sache et comprenne ce qu'il lit, car la compréhension des textes est indispensable pour une scolarité sans difficultés.

Les buts du livre sont :

- d'éclairer les difficultés spécifiques du langage écrit de la langue Française et d'éviter à commettre des erreurs entre le son entendu et le mot écrit.
- d'acquérir cet automatisme de la langue qui peut faire défaut aux dyslexiques.

Il utilise pour cela une méthode basée sur la technique phonologique de la langue.

L'élève apprend à prononcer les sons et à faire l'association graphique des lettres *avant* de commencer à écrire.

Il est prouvé que grâce à cette méthode, l'élève en difficulté, avec l'aide de ses parents, sera remis à niveau et devrait normalement être capable de lire après une période de 2 à 3 mois, tout en continuant son travail scolaire.

Cette méthode, simple et bien structurée, vous aidera pour guider votre enfant avec succès dans sa scolarité. L'élève travaillera non seulement mieux, et avec plus d'assurance mais aussi plus rapidement.

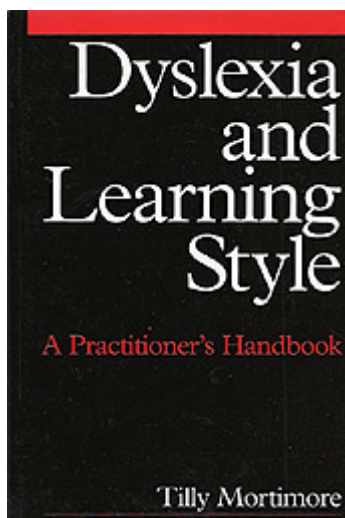
Elle est fondée sur un travail régulier de 12 à 15 minutes par jour pendant \pm 6 mois, et permet aux parents d'accompagner l'enfant à la maison alors qu'il va normalement à l'école. Les premiers progrès seront nettement visibles entre 4 et 6 semaines.

L'élève va commencer à lire spontanément tout ce qu'il a devant les yeux alors que jusque là il lisait avec hésitation. Ces progrès se reflèteront bientôt aussi dans l'écriture qui devient progressivement plus régulière, nette et visible et elles vous confirmeront que vous êtes sur le bon chemin. Au bout de 3 mois l'élève devrait avoir rattrapé un retard en lecture d'un an et demi. Après 6 mois l'élève aura non seulement acquis une base solide en lecture et en écriture mais aussi l'automatisme qui lui faisait défaut auparavant.

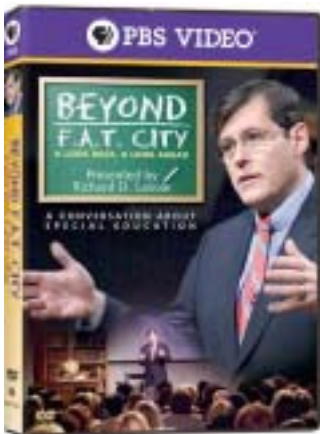
Utilisée avec succès depuis 1980 aux Pays Bas cette méthode a été adaptée et perfectionnée depuis 1999 pour la langue française en étroite collaboration avec son créateur.

Tilly Mortimore: Dyslexia and Learning Style

The practical teaching suggestions contained in this book are firmly based upon research findings and have proved successful in a range of mainstream and specialist settings.



D·I·T·T member Susan van Alsenoy sends us three treasures from her research findings:



Richard Lavoie: Beyond F.A.T. City

F.A.T – Frustration, Anxiety, Tension – three all-too-familiar feelings for the families of children with learning disabilities. It is the basis for a 1987 workshop simulating the children’s daily experiences. Richard Lavoie, creator of the original F.A.T. City Workshop, reviews the history and philosophy of the project, the major trends and issues in the field of learning disabilities since 1987, and the challenges ahead for parents and educators, in this new DVD.

Course for parents in the teaching of children with dyslexia (or similar difficulties)

Many parents find they do not have the necessary training in the techniques which will help their dyslexic child. This distance-learning multimedia course provides practical training in how to teach a child who is, or may be, dyslexic, at home. The course is especially suitable for:

- parents with a dyslexic child in school, and
- parents home-schooling their dyslexic child.

<http://www.dyslexia-parent.com/course.html>



Dyslexia in different languages

Dyslexia in Different Languages, ed. Nata Goulandris, published by Whurr, 2003.

http://www.dyslexia-adults.com/dyslexia_languages.html

Money matters



Thanks go to Hewlett Packard for their donation of state-of-the-art computers now in full use. They are also used for courses for young dyslexic learners on Saturdays.

Money to spare?

D·I·T·T welcomes your support. Tax-deductible donations to support our latest project can be made through the King Baudouin Foundation.

Research funding & findings

Further support is also welcomed by the

Dyslexia Research Trust

Led by Professor John Stein, an active member of the D·I·T·T Scientific Advisory Committee, its major aims are:

- *to support and conduct properly controlled scientific research*
- *to provide unbiased information and guidance*

- to support and conduct properly controlled scientific research into dyslexia and related conditions (such as specific language difficulties, dyspraxia, ADHD and autistic spectrum disorders) especially from the biological perspective, and
- to provide unbiased information and guidance to parents, teachers, doctors, other professionals and researchers on the findings and practical implications of such research.

World-class scientific expertise

Leading scientific experts currently associated with the Dyslexia Research Trust include:

- Professor John Stein, who is widely recognised as one of the world's leading experts in research into the biological basis of dyslexia and related conditions.
- Dr Sue Fowler, who – with Professor John Stein – first established that visual processing can play a role in dyslexia; a fact that used to be contested, but which is now accepted worldwide.
- Dr Alex Richardson, who has pioneered research into the role of nutrition (and particularly fatty acids) in the treatment of dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and associated conditions including autistic spectrum disorders.

Sensory (visual and auditory) and motor function

Work in this area includes studies of visual and auditory function and the control of movement. New treatments have been developed for the kinds of visual problems that can contribute to reading difficulties – most of which cannot be detected by standard tests of vision. Our studies have shown that targeted orthoptic treatments such as eye exercises or occluding one eye for reading can lead to significant improvement in reading. Coloured lenses or filters can also make a difference in

some cases: yellow filters have been shown to increase the clarity of text and blue filters seem to decrease glare and the perception of motion.

Additional evidence suggests that basic auditory processing could underlie some of the difficulties that many dyslexic people have in acquiring good 'phonological' skills (i.e. recognising and manipulating the sounds of language). Our research team is now developing tests for early identification of difficulties with auditory processing, as well as investigating the relationships between auditory processing and working memory.

...now developing tests for early identification of difficulties...

Nutrition and biochemical function

This research programme currently includes both experimental studies of biochemistry and clinical treatment trials of nutritional intervention in the form of fatty acid supplements. Increasing evidence suggests that supplementing the diet with certain fatty acids – Omega 3 (found in fish oil) and Omega 6 (from evening primrose oil) – might be of some help in the management of dyslexia and related conditions. Dr Alex Richardson has led a series of carefully controlled treatment trials, in which the effects of fatty acid supplements were compared with the effects of a placebo (inactive) treatment. Most importantly, in each trial no-one knew who was receiving which treatment until the trial was finished. Results from the first of these studies showed that, after three months, children receiving the fatty acid supplement had better attention-span and fewer behavioural problems compared with those receiving the placebo. Preliminary results from a second study showed improvements in reading and spelling following fatty acid treatment, and a similar trial of fatty acid supplementation involving dyspraxic children is showing very promising results. These exciting findings suggest that simple changes in diet really can make a difference to some children, and similar studies of adults are now under way.

These exciting findings suggest that simple changes in diet really can make a difference...

Family Studies

The Dyslexia Research Trust is also involved in the world's leading investigations of the genetics of dyslexia. Results from the first full genome screen confirmed linkages to several sites already thought to contain genes that play a role in dyslexia, and also revealed some new

ones, although no actual genes have yet been identified. Furthermore, genetic factors can never fully explain dyslexia – because if one identical twin is dyslexic, there is only a 50% chance that the other will show the same characteristics. However, identifying the genes involved will improve our understanding of the biology of dyslexia and could open the way to new methods of management.

...supports free research clinics ... where hundreds of children and adults are assessed each year...

The Trust supports free research clinics in Reading and Oxford where hundreds of children and adults are assessed each year in the course of our research studies, and many of them benefit from new treatments developed through this research.

Further information about our work can be found on our Web site: www.dyslexic.org.uk.

Dyslexia Research Trust

Oxford University Laboratory of Physiology,
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Tel: +44 1865 272116 Fax: +44 1865 272478
Charity Number 1052989

Announcement

Bologna Children's Book Fair

Stewart and Judith Sanson attended for D·I·T·T as part of the Brussels and Wallonia Export Stand – a festive and useful occasion.

Reflections

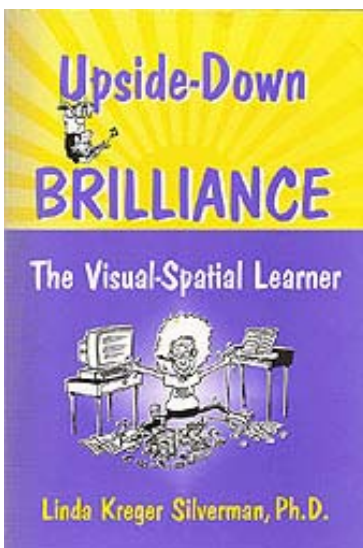
Finding my own solutions

by dyslexic Thelma Good

- Computer has helped; spell checkers have helped, talking has helped (I get words wrong, sideways and back to front).
- When I learned to relax I noticed I made far fewer mistakes. It was not easy – years of teachers and my mother had made me very tense.
- Filing by colour.
- Writing in italics – less obvious spelling variations – and learned pronouncing the letters out loud.
- At quite an early age I decided that most ways people tried to teach me to do things did not work for me. I responded by exploring to find ways that did, inventing my own solutions. Often the solutions have visual and three-dimensional basis.

Cartoon by Buck Jones

Taken from the book *Upside-down brilliance* by L.K. Silverman, recommended by Marlene Merlivat. Dr Silverman coined the term 'visual spatial learner' (VSL) in 1981 and has been helping VSLs and their families for over 20 years as an internationally recognized expert on giftedness.



Edited by Judith Sanson