

Eurythmy as a Critical Art: What This Means for Its Future

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The successful work that I have been doing, of evoking the speech sound gesture-impulses from within by immersing myself in the sounds through intensive speech-work, has led me to many insights into the condition of eurythmy in our time. But before I share these insights and discuss Rudolf Steiner's description of the 'naive' approach to art compared to the 'critical' approach, I want to lay some ground work.

In his editorial for the Michaelmas* 1999 Goetheanum Newsletter for the Section for the Performing Arts (p. 1), the leader of the Section, Werner Barfod, summoned us to attention:

What do you see as necessary, and how can it be done fruitfully[?] What can we do that the crisis of our arts can become fruitful? How do we work on new ways of working in our arts? Who has positive experiences that he / she would like to report to us all?

*(The festival of Michaelmas falls on September 29; the Goetheanum is in Dornach, Switzerland.)

I think that Werner Barfod was right to use the word "crisis." A group of forty-four third-year students from twelve European schools held a five-day conference that year and echoed his alert with their "Open letter, To all eurythmy trainings" for the *Newsletter* (p. 105). They wrote:

Eurythmy is in a crisis and it also lies in our [the students'] responsibility whether or not it will have a future. And because we do share and would like to share this responsibility with you all, we have composed this open letter. This crisis is expressed probably in all realms of work of eurythmy, but also precisely in the trainings. In the eurythmy-training, we meet students and teachers. From the latter we expect ability and knowledge of their subject but today we can no longer learn eurythmy through imitation. We today can only connect ourselves by going through the eye of the needle of our own conscious training in the feelings. ... During the training, we start to search for the eurythmist in ourselves, not for a general, ideal image.

These are Michaelic voices; they befit our Age, the Age of the Consciousness Soul.

In our *EANA Newsletter* for spring 2016, Susan Eggers pointed to the challenges that eurythmists face in Waldorf schools, where they struggle to gain consistent support from the school community for eurythmy as a mainstay within the curriculum. She suggested that our Waldorf colleagues "need

to experience, appreciate and understand eurythmy as the unique art arising completely out of anthroposophy" (p. 24). Laura Radefeld echoed this with similar concerns in her article on "The Overall Health of Eurythmy," and she wrote, "work[ing] locally to make our eurythmy programs more vibrant, more colorful and attractive is essential." We see that the resolution of the crisis has not yet come about; and this is despite startup initiatives in many places around the world, enthusiasm for formal certification programs and wonderfully skillful and captivating performances.

I want to contribute what I can to our understanding of this crisis. Healing can't be assured without knowing, firstly, the nature of the illness, and secondly, what to do to support a restoration of health, and not only that, but hopefully a new and enhanced condition of vitality. Taking steps toward healing this crisis in eurythmy has been an imperative for me personally, too, because I have suffered the pain of this crisis and impasse and it led me to quit eurythmy just a few years after graduating. My work in the present has changed all of this. I have uncovered means to surmount this impasse and move toward healing this crisis in a big way, and these means of relief are the reason for my article now.

Looking into the nature of the birth of eurythmy

I have an intimacy with many aspect of the birth of eurythmy, its very beginning, because my recent work has involved making a fresh start in speech eurythmy by following Dr. Steiner's very first advices to Lory Maier-Smits, and in particular, his advice that she should write sentences for each of the vowel sounds, use these sentences to do what she referred to as "speech exercises," and try to "dance" them. In these first advices, Rudolf Steiner included the stamping of alliterations and jumping the Agrippa positions (see Magdalene Siegloch, *How the New Art of Eurythmy Began*, *HNA*, pp. 14ff; and see my article on the Agrippa positions).

Lory wrote sentences for the vowels, spoke them and tried to "dance" them. Perhaps she preserved these in her notebooks; but if so, I don't know of any that have been passed down to us. With the support of her mother she worked diligently and energetically to unfold her extensive capacities for this new art, "utterly open," with a heart full of trust in Dr. Steiner's directions (*HNA*, p. 37). It was early 1912, and Lory was just about to turn nineteen years old. About this speaking and dancing exercise, she recorded:

... I tried [...] to express these mainly dynamic experiences that I had in speaking the sentence [...] by walking, springing, hopping, dragging – but, frankly, mainly with the legs. With my arms and the rest of my body I merely gently indicated the upward or forward or downward motion.

She was not able to sense, and did not bring forth, discrete movement-impulses for the vowels. (Note, "[...]" appears in both places in the book, *HNA*, p. 20.)

Seven months later, she and her mother went to Munich, where Dr. Steiner hoped to begin her lessons. Upon arriving, she was immediately summoned to participate as a ‘dancer’ in his third mystery drama, *The Guardian of the Threshold*. He was eager to assist the development of this new art form, eurythmy, and to have it be seen. He gave Lory one brief lesson introducing the three vowels, *i* (ee), *a* (ah) and *o*. As Siegloch wrote, Rudolf Steiner’s personal instruction of Lory “was the only training which [he] himself carried out. The exceptional configurations of destiny made it unique” (p. 36). Lory recorded that in this lesson, he began with *I* and told her: “Stand upright, ... and try to feel a column from the balls of your feet to your head. Learn to feel this column, this uprightness, as *i*” (p. 31).

With these words, the template was established for how she would enter the speech sound gestures: he instructed her, described the sounds, demonstrated key features and urged her to “learn to feel this” as *i*, or as *V*, etc. (pp. 38-39). This same basic template has guided the teaching and learning of eurythmy ever since. For the most part, like Lory, I took my start with learned movements – just as we all typically do. And with these, as Siegloch explained on page 38, I strove “toward achieving a “sensitive perception of [my] own movement while doing the sound in eurythmy,” i.e., while doing these given gestures. In short, just as all of my eurythmy schoolmates did, I built up my eurythmy on the basis of the movements we were shown, together with the mental images, imaginations and meanings that we were given for them.

These experiences – not experiences of the gesture-impulses of the sounds themselves directly from their source in the movement of the Logos within our speech – are the basis of the experiences that we acquire when we “learn to feel” what is in the learned gestures meant for each vowel or consonant. *These experiences* are what we seek to ensoul our movement and expression with; and these are what our onlookers witness in performance. As a student, I understood that I was to ‘feel into’ the given gestures and work to ‘make them my own’ as strongly as I could, with the hope and expectation that they would in time become as real to me as if I were speaking. In *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*, however (EVSp, Lect. 2, near end), Rudolf Steiner told us that it is “very necessary that you should gradually feel your way into the real nature of the sounds,” and added that they “could in no way be other than they are” – in other words, he knew them as *objective* realities. This means that the “real nature of the sounds” is something beyond and much different from a set of learned and effortfully-ensouled gestures (which, by the way, we keep changing – e.g., the soft, slow, stylized *B*, with one arm high and the other low, is a new invention). And I now know that with learned gestures – though worked on and refined – I only ever

achieved an approximation of the real gestures of the sounds.

It has been important for me to discover that the verb Rudolf Steiner used – which we are given in English as ‘to feel,’ ‘learn to feel’ – was ‘empfinden’: to feel, sense, perceive, really having the meaning of all three together. The verb, ‘fühlen,’ is simply to feel. I have come to the conviction that *empfinden* should not be translated or spoken of as if it were the same as *fühlen*. When we are only given the word ‘feeling,’ this is confusing and easily leads to mingling and enmeshing our personal-subjective feeling responses into what needs to be a more active and *objective* engagement, which is what I believe Dr. Steiner pointed to with his frequent use of this verb, ‘empfinden,’ in relation to eurythmy.

Where has this template for our practice brought us?

The signs and symptoms of our relation to eurythmy are evident. Bringing clarity to these with sincerity can help us through this crisis:

1. We hunger for more inputs from outside. We seek more remnants of Steiner’s anthroposophical activity, unearthing new documents, revisiting old ones and gathering up all possible indications and ideas from those who received his direction. This is fine; but our need to absorb, elaborate and incorporate these into our movement suggests that our *own* process has not led us to direct and full experiences of the “real nature of the sounds” at the well that is within each of us. Therefore, instead of using these valuable resources only as references relative to our independent foundation work, we still lay our foundation on *Rudolf Steiner’s* direct experiences.
2. In performance, eurythmists can be seen to move *out-of-time* with their speaker or musician. To me, this is a sure sign that the gestures are not newly, freshly experienced from the source within. To my experience, failure to be in unison with the spoken word or music must result in a painful dissonance, just as much as if my expression were audible. Therefore I must feel driven to prepare and rehearse sufficiently with the speaker or musician to ensure unity and avoid this dissonance. If I don’t do this, I cheat my onlookers because the correspondence between gesture and audible sound is gone – ‘eu-rythmy’ (harmonious movement) is gone; and I’ve given the onlookers a bad check and false promises! Our disregard for their need shows a lack of understanding for what our ‘job’ is in performing eurythmy.

We can be seen to give frequent unconscious expression to certain sounds, such as in legs positioned crossing in *e*, and balletic feet angled out in *ah* when waking. And we often fail to give definite expression to the formative force of the plosives, the earth sounds. For example, we damp down the prompt, yellow movement-impulse of *G* with a

green or reddish hue that dissolves and blends all movements into a seamless, vowel-ish stream (see *EVSp*, Lect. 4, end; *Occult Science*, Ch. 5, Part 5 ~ 2/3in). Our lack of response to the distinct movement-impulse color of each sound suggests that we are missing out on feeling these gesture-impulses from within; so we're also missing out on the beauty of the crucial transitions between them. We might want to recall that Steiner said that *these*, the transitions, are the truly spiritual element in eurythmy (see *EVSp*, Lect. 8, pp. 1-2; Lect. 4). Often missing too, are the fresh spiritual impulses that initiate lines and shape phrases. And, sadly, we often miss out on the rhythmic changes of heavy and light, long and short, when we melt them into a same-size sweep of gesture-movement that in the process endows all verbs with soulful duration, excludes the prepositions – the invisible spiritual relationships – and in music blurs major and minor.

3. Onlookers who are not initiated into the code of what gesture means what (and even those who are initiated) often go away mystified about the real value of this eurythmy. But as the Dutch eurythmist, Annemarie Ehrlich,* said, “eurythmy is present in each person.”¹ Hence, our onlookers’ bewilderment can only mean that the eurythmy that is in us as performers is not alive and strong; because if it were, it would summon distinct resonance in our onlookers in response to what we present. Then as real participants – no longer as spectators – they, the onlookers, would experience something moment-to-moment that is truly new and different from what they see in dance.

Inside our eurythmy circles, we tend to assume that our movements express what we think they do – we know the code: when I move like this, I express *L*; when I move like that, I express the note *G*[#]. But others don’t know the code; and their tepid, puzzled responses (yet often still trusting and eager to believe) suggest that the nature of our expression is not what we think it is. It is no good telling ourselves that onlookers’ life bodies, ether bodies,² are just too hardened.

There is also the problem of faking it: I largely faked it together with a classmate for a long passage in a piece of chamber music at graduation! We had no other option.

4. Performances can be designed to make things engaging for onlookers: depicting what we have in mind through detailed costuming, over-moving, turning away from the onlooker to face a direction or follow one’s nose, miming, getting down onto the floor, stabbing the air as though striking bells, thrusting and slashing, etc. But all of these deeds of compensation reveal that our direct feeling-perceptions are too weak to support our expression; because when the gesture-impulses and the sound-sequences of the words – where ‘awful,’ ‘fall,’ ‘flaw,’ ‘flow’ and ‘flee’ are distinct images – and the directions and harmonic changes and so on, are inwardly clear and compelling for us, our deft and

immediate expression of them will be perceived and shared by our onlookers; and nothing more is needed. Without this fresh, vibrant, direct experience of objective facts, we easily fall into the false attractiveness of arbitrary personal styles and choreography, and doing ‘our own thing.’

My experiences tell me that all of these developments cannot be otherwise. We’ve reached an impasse of our own making, just as modern philosophy and science do when they assume that nothing can be known beyond the reach of the five physical senses (see *Truth and Knowledge* and see *PSA*, below). Of necessity, they and we reach an impasse and fall into decay when we refrain from building a sure cognitive foundation ‘from within’ by developing and conducting our own primary anthroposophical activity – i.e., ‘human wisdom-grasping’ activity. In our case, in eurythmy work, we rely instead on the fruits of Rudolf Steiner’s anthroposophical activity as our surrogate bedrock. But in the absence of understanding, embracing and strengthening our innate human possibility, our gift, for anthroposophical activity, and in the absence of sufficient means for doing our own primary foundational work with the gesture-impulses in both speech and tone eurythmy, we cannot do otherwise.

How are we to surmount this self-imposed impasse and crisis?

I think we could each find abundant help through examining our relationship to this precious art. And one way to do this would be through exploring how we shape this relationship and determine our actions relative to it with the help of what Rudolf Steiner wrote in Chapter 9, “The Idea of Freedom,” in his book, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (PSA)*. In this chapter, he discussed two basic factors that govern our activity as human individuals: our **motives** and our **characterological disposition or driving force**.

In my own words and using examples within the context of eurythmy, I’ll try to explain these two factors (please do consult the chapter itself). Rudolf Steiner outlined four levels of motives, which are the ideas – the mental pictures, thoughts, envisionings, concepts and imaginations – that serve as the reasons that stand behind our actions, i.e., our moral conduct; and four levels of dispositions that provide the driving force for actually taking action, i.e., those factors in our nature that lead us or enable us to rouse and act on a given motive. Our activities can summon different levels and mixes of motives and driving forces; but I think it is important in eurythmy work to recognize which motives and driving forces are typical for us. (These distinctions become clearer after working with them for a while, so fret not!)

The lowest level of **motives** involves mental images of the personal (i.e., egotistical) gain to be had either directly or indirectly, as benefit or pleasure or by avoiding adversity or pain. Motives in eurythmy at this level would include the prospect of joy in movement, belonging to an elite group,

using poems and music as vehicles, dominating others, or escaping discomfort by winging it or following blindly, etc.

The next higher, second, level of motives is rooted in principles set forth by authority, as in the family, church or state, as in eurythmy practice also. We do not question their source and validity. Internalized, they form the conscience.

A third level of motives is achieved when we examine these principles or rules that stem from external authority by giving them thoughtful consideration, to determine why we should base our actions upon them. Our ideas of the cultural and human benefits our eurythmy can provide and the moral goals we've developed in the art become set principles for us, though we might still seek personal gain.

The fourth and highest level of motives is reached when we determine our reasons for acting on a case-by-case basis in relation to each perceived circumstance. Our actions are informed by a fresh, cognitive grasp of the action to be taken. In the case of a eurythmy gesture, this would mean that my gesture is not what gives me pleasure or spares me effort to do, nor is it what I was instructed to do, nor yet is it the one I've personally decided is meaningful and correct for the sound: I carry it out the way I do because I've perceived and cognized the gesture-impulse for that sound directly from its source within myself, and I bring it forth freshly in every instance – likewise with all elements in eurythmy. We are then capable of grasping the nature and features of each new piece without imposing preset ideas, styles and treatments upon it. We have become capable of conceiving of ideals without examples to fashion them upon, and of acting on them purely on the basis of our clear and enduring grasp of the idea-content itself, without any other motivation. This is because it contains in itself all the richness of feeling and will that it requires. At this level, we act out of love for our ideal, which is born through our intuitive cognitive activity.

The **characterological disposition** and **driving force** have to do with our responses to the perceptions we have. They govern our readiness to act on the motives that suggest themselves to us, and shape how our action comes about. At the lowest level, our responses happen immediately, without thought and without feeling. Included would be responses to instincts, biological needs, and urges – among which I think would be the urge to imitate, as well as blind movement urges that are followed arbitrarily in eurythmy. On a higher level, this is the realm of tact and of established habits, such as eurythmy gestures that become habitual and automatic.

At the next higher, second, level of driving force, our will is stirred by the feelings that we have come to associate with the things we perceive. Our fright when we see a child run toward a busy street stirs our action. If I've associated good feelings with the dance floor, I'll be likely to stir my will to act on the idea, the motive, that eurythmy would be healthy to do. In every case, these feelings are personal and

subjective. At this level, in shaping my eurythmy expression I will want to favor gestures that I have subjectively 'lived into' in ways that please me, that I associate with a feeling of grace, or of power, etc.; and I will gloss over those that I don't. But the question arises: since eurythmy requires us to awaken through our feeling-sensing-perceptions (in German, *Empfindungen*) to everything that lives in poetry, music and movement, and since *these* feeling-perceptions are to be *objective* in quality, how do we tell the difference between these feeling-perceptions and our ordinary subjective feelings? In eurythmy, whatever feeling-perceptions our "heart" provides to us are meant to "rise up into [our] head" (Rudolf Steiner; *HNA*, p. 38) – i.e., we are to *know* what we are responding to: we are not to rest enveloped in simple feeling-awareness as animals do. This means that we are to work at a considerably higher level than perceive-and-do or sense-and-do as in level one, or feel-and-do as in level two. However, to complicate matters, there are two different kinds of feeling-perceptions that pertain to our expression of the elements of eurythmy: one kind is based on the feeling-perceptions we can gain by 'feeling into' and exploring the objective qualities belonging to the positions we take with our body. We approach the Agrippa positions this way, and also the planet and zodiac positions which we (usually) have little power to come to on our own. The other kind is based on the feeling-perceptions we can have of the movement-impulses of the sounds – vowels, consonants, tones as scale degrees – as they arise from their source in the Logos at work in our own speech and singing activity, and for all of the inaudible, unspoken and invisible aspects of movement, poetry and music, e.g., the parts of our being, the directions, colors, harmonies, pitch, intervals, phrasing, beat, soul moods, etc. For me, it has been crucial to realize that eurythmy is visible speech (or wordless singing), not visible *heard* speech (or *heard* singing/music – see Rudolf Steiner's *Practical Advice to Teachers* (Lect. 2 ~ 1/3 in). The feeling-perceptions I've gained from the gesture-impulses themselves show me that these are my most direct means of knowing the gestures. In comparison, I've found that the results of 'feeling into' the inherited gestures are not only unnecessary: they are shallow, unreliable and frustrating. I've also found that they *block* my perception of the delicate gesture-impulses, which are easily silenced.

The third level of driving force is that of practical experience, as Dr. Steiner called it. Through living, we store up mental images and thoughts about what we've done and what we've perceived others to do – such as gestures in eurythmy. When we meet with the sounds and notes we associate with these gestures, we call up our mental images and descriptions and apply them. However, when we use these to make ourselves feel what we think we should feel while doing the gestures, we impose our head on our heart;

this is the reverse of what Rudolf Steiner advised, and it is unhealthy. Also, when mental referencing and copying is habitual in a field of activity, it can exclude both thought and feeling and descend to the lowest level of driving force.

At the fourth and highest level of driving force, action doesn't arise in us as an automatic sense-and-do response, nor as a feel-and-do response, nor through the suggestion of mental images from past experiences. Our will is no longer activated or informed by these factors. This level of driving force becomes synonymous with the fourth and highest level of motives, so that in our work, we are also no longer governed by personal gain, rules or our well-considered goals: the piece alone speaks to us. Since our actions are not dictated by anything other than our pure, intuitive, cognitive grasp of what we wish to make manifest, this is the realm of freedom in human activity, the highest level of our moral conduct. Our daily deeds are usually a mix of the levels; but only conduct arising at the fourth level bears the stamp of freedom. At this level in eurythmy, nothing but our direct, objective feeling-perceptions and cognition sustain us in our work to know what lives in poems and pieces of music, and to express this through the lawful movements of our body.

Looking at these levels of motives and driving forces, we can see the life of our Sentient Soul at the lower levels, where we focus on the sensations and subjective feelings of our body and soul. In the middle, our ego works on these as it develops our Intellectual Soul through thinking. And at the fourth and highest level, we develop our Consciousness Soul through seeking truth – that which is permanent, which gives us the means for spiritual communion with each other (for descriptions, see *Theosophy*, Ch. 1 ~ 1/2 in, and *Occult Science*, Ch. 2 ~ 1/2 in). Therefore, only through our truth-seeking Consciousness Soul activity can we engage in the direct 'human wisdom-grasping' work of anthroposophy, to know ourselves and the cosmos.

Moving toward eurythmy as a critical art

So now, at last, turning toward what Rudolf Steiner wrote about the naive and critical approaches to art (with his emphasis, *Truth and Knowledge*, end of Ch. 3):

In all of our activities, two things must be taken into account: the activity itself, and our knowledge of its laws. We may be completely absorbed in the activity without worrying about its laws. An artist is in this position when he does not reflect about the laws according to which he creates, but *applies* them, using feeling and sensitivity. We may call him 'naive.' It is possible, however, to observe oneself, and enquire into the laws inherent in one's own activity, thus abandoning the naive consciousness just described through knowing exactly the scope of and justification for what one does. This I shall call *critical*. ... Critical reflection then is the opposite of the naive approach.

For Rudolf Steiner, this critical approach to art was clearly no emaciated exercise in mental futility. On the contrary: it leads to deep satisfaction within the life of will and feeling far beyond anything that naive art can offer. It involves the highest levels of motive and driving force. To me, his use of the word, "justification," points to our independent proving of these laws, i.e., engagement in our own anthroposophical research and verification. Then our artistic work stands upon the bedrock of our *own* process, not upon the surrogate bedrock of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical process. In order for eurythmy to be valid as a "completely anthroposophical art" – *rather than* as a naive art that finds a place for itself as yet another form of subjective dance expression and entertainment – all of our gestures and movements must in every moment be objectively reborn resonantly from within us. And what stands as proof of their reality – together with the resonant and grateful communion of our onlookers – is our well-trodden and completely surveyable path to and from their source that becomes second nature to us, *not* the finished gestures. *I believe that only this level of activity gives us the possibility of guiding eurythmy past this present impasse and crisis, while bestowing upon it the vitality it needs to flourish throughout all future time. We dare not hang back!*

But this independent level of work requires us to have effective means for gaining deep and direct experiences of our human speech and singing, to find our bedrock through our own anthroposophical activity. It seems to me that when Rudolf Steiner initiated the art of eurythmy, his efforts centered upon attempting to give Lory Maier-Smits (and us) the means to imagine and feel what it *would* be like to experience the gesture-impulses directly from within, as he did – like trying to help a blind person sense what it would be like to see something. But I've found that with sufficient means, I can have these gesture-impulse perceptions directly, in detail. I do not need to rely on elaborating the things that have been passed down to me from him. The poetic miniature speech sound etude-studies that I've composed in response to his suggestion to Lory have proved to be exactly these means. And anyone who is sufficiently determined, sensitive and persistent can write these. (The ones contained in my book, *The Speech Sound Etudes, Volume I*, however, are well-honed and have stellar track records.)

In my report on my work, I described my composition and use of the etudes and discussed the preparation and inner support that was necessary for me to meet with such good success. (See it at our EANA website, artistic category: *Etudes: Feeling the Gestures and Finding the Figures*.) Thusly prepared, I did Lory's tasks; and I found that the sentences of pure vowel assonance can evoke our inward experiences of the vowel gesture-impulses; the alliterative sentences that I wrote for the consonants evoke those for the

consonants; and the Agrippa positions can open us to the tonal scale degree/step and interval experiences if we begin with an attentive standing position for the first degree and end with a no-jump standing position as the octave. I do the positions both ascending and descending, either with jumping as Dr. Steiner suggested to Lory – calling my will into the work – or with jumping only for the fifth, sixth and seventh positions of these eight, for the upper tetrachord.

This speech-work with the sentences has also taught me the three distinct roles that the colors play in the gesture-impulses. I found that the ‘veil’ and ‘character’ colors do not act as movement colors like the ‘movement’ color does (see more in my report). Also, among the many non-physical, odd-but-real gesture details that I now experience directly – as Dr. Steiner also experienced directly and showed in the Figure drawings – are: the head lumps of *V*, the way the feet move to plant themselves in *F*, the untamable feeling of *R*, the stretched head of *K*, the peculiar, narrowed feet in *P*, the soft envelope of *H*, the shoe heels of *e*, the bare head and pigeon-toed feet of *B*, the ear angles of *o*. I make no setup, no physical preparation for any gesture: there is no need.

The Eurythmy Meditation

I seek within
 The working of creative forces,
 The living of creative powers.
 It tells me
 Of earth's might of weight
 Through the word of my feet,
 It tells me
 Of air's forces of form
 Through the singing of my hands,
 It tells me
 Of heaven's power of light
 Through the sensing of my head,
 How the world in MAN [the human being]
 Speaks, sings, senses.

– Rudolf Steiner
 (rendered by Kate Reese Hurd)

Regarding speech-work with alliteration and assonance, I am not at all advocating speaking while doing eurythmy movement in general: that practice would be depleting and could even be destructive when the gestures are automatic, without feeling and carried by the speaking. But with quiet, inward poise, speaking assonant and alliterative etudes such as these evokes the gesture-impulses within us; and when these impulses are clear, strongly felt and known, we are then able to bring them forth as nuanced gestures of any size that speak completely. There remains no urge to speak, nor any need for the habit of speech suppression: one dwells in pure eurythmy movement. And this is marvelous, because the bottom line in eurythmy is this: we can only con-

sciously, truthfully express what we actually experience.

The quality and depth of our eurythmy expression and its receptive resonance with our onlookers depends entirely on the quality and depth of resonance of our direct experiences of all of the elements that hold sway in our art. Let us take inspiration from what Rudolf Steiner told us in the first lecture of his cycle, *Eurythmy as Visible Singing*, pp. 1-2:³

From the side of the eurythmists themselves, much can be done with a view to increasing a right understanding of eurythmy. And here it is most important to bear in mind what is perceived by the onlooker. The onlooker sees not only the bare movement or the gesture that the eurythmist presents, but actually perceives what the eurythmist feels and inwardly experiences. And for this, with this, it is necessary that in the act of eurythmy by the eurythmist is in fact [tatsächlich] experienced – is experienced above all things in the case of anything that is indeed to be presented – that is the speech-Gebilde in speech eurythmy; in music eurythmy, of course, the music-Gebilde.

‘Gebilde’ in German refers to formative structuring, shaping, building, constructing, fashioning, arranging, etc. This applies to the phenomena of human speech and music – how they are formed and structured. And a bit further on, he said:

Here, however, it is above all things necessary that bare gesture-making and movement-production in eurythmy be transcended, that within the sphere of eurythmy – also in speech eurythmy – the real sound will in fact be felt-sensed-perceived [empfunden].

And in the fourth lecture, about 2/3 in, he reiterated: ¾

For the onlooker can differentiate quite clearly – they are not aware of this, for it does not penetrate their consciousness – but unconsciously the onlooker can tell quite clearly whether a eurythmist is rattling off the movements automatically or whether they are permeated with feeling.

“Permeated with feeling” would of course mean permeated with objective feeling-experiences, not our personal feelings. In support of the deepening of these objective experiences, I have also begun to work toward developing the means* to evoke the movement-impulses for music eurythmy from within through wordless singing, alone and in harmonies; and as always, I am supported by the wise counsel and encouragement of the Eurythmy Meditation; it affirms me in my engagement of all three of my soul forces in service to this remarkable art. Let’s all do what we can; and let’s keep in touch! *(see my *Singing and Jumping* report, PART IV.)

And P.S., do please take note of Felix Lindenmaier’s article on the tone angles in the Easter 2016 *Performing Arts Section Newsletter*, Nr. 64. It is well worth our study!

NOTES

¹ Note for p. 3, left. Annemarie Ehrlich has taught eurythmy in the workplace for decades. Her remarkable two-part 2014 conversation with Leo Stronks – in Dutch with English subtitles – is still posted on our EANA videos page, but it is now marked ‘private’ and I have been unable to find it elsewhere. Fortunately, I took detailed notes!

² Note for p. 3, left. Our etheric body is that part of our human constitution made up of the formative or etheric forces, which are in continual movement. Our astral body works upon these etheric, formative forces to build, govern and maintain the shape and functioning of our physical body, which is made up of the elements of the mineral kingdom. Our life-filled physical body is therefore evidence of the existence of the etheric body, though this ‘body’ itself is only perceptible to supersensible perception. (For descriptions of the bodies and functions, see Rudolf Steiner’s books: *Theosophy*, Ch. 1, a bit more than 1/3 in, and *Occult Science*, Ch. 2, first 5 pages).

³ Note for p. 6, left, regarding the translation of these passages into English, in particular the concepts ‘Lautgebilde’ (speech-Gebilde) and ‘Tongebilde’ (music-Gebilde). In the 1977 edition of *Eurythmy as Visible Music [Singing]*. I believe that ‘Gebilde’ was appropriately conveyed by the Compton-Burnetts as “structure and formation.” However, in the more recent Anastasi edition, this concept is given as “portrayal,” suggesting instead some sort of depiction and some sort of content whose origin is not at all characterized as to whether it is subjective or objective. But the speech-Gebilde and the music-Gebilde are objective realities and lawful structures, just as Rudolf Steiner indicated throughout his lectures. See the discussion of this in my article, “The Scale-Degree Intervals Give Rise to our Tonal Music Gebilde,” *EANA Newsletter*, spring 2019; and see further discussion of ‘Gebilde’ and of Rudolf Steiner’s use of the word, ‘Ton,’ in the BASICS section of PART I of my report, *Singing and Jumping Opens the Way to a Vital Music Eurythmy Foundation* (posted at the EANA website, artistic category).

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- Eurythmy as Visible Speech (EVSp)*, GA 279, fifteen lectures by Rudolf Steiner, Dornach, June 24 to July 12, 1924, translated by Vera and Judy Compton-Burnett; Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1931, 1944, 1956, 1984.
- The Eurythmy Meditation may be found at the end of Lect. 14 in *EVSp* and following Lect. 8 in *EVSing*.
- The Figure drawings were made and introduced by Rudolf Steiner in 1922. See them in *Eurythmy and the Impulse of Dance, With Sketches for Eurythmy Figures by Rudolf Steiner*; text written by Marjorie Raffé, Cecil Harwood and Marguerite Lundgren; Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1975.
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