

## Eurythmy as Means to a World Conception

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“...The lawless leap of joy becomes a dance, the shapeless gesture a graceful and harmonious miming speech; the confused noises of perception unfold themselves, begin to obey a rhythm and weld themselves into song.” Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 1795

The art of eurythmy, as with every genuine occupation, has a transforming effect upon those who undertake it. Each occupation develops certain senses and mood of soul, as well as engaging the activity of the sense of self (ego) in a certain way. How does eurythmy educate the human being? All applications of eurythmy stem from its artistic nature.

The art of eurythmy enlivens the senses and transforms the living body into a genuine sense organ. Eurythmy disciplines the soul and vivifies its experience. It requires new relationships between its participants, a new social structure.

The *sense of touch* begins to perceive that which presses against it from the physical earth. The feet, which otherwise only carry the body, become sense organs that tell the soul of gravity and freedom from it in walking. The eurythmist is freed and then surrenders again to the earth in every step.

The *sense of touch* is joined in its activity by the *life* and *movement*. It is transformed for it begins to feel another force pressing against it, just as tangibly as the pressing of objects. Space becomes a sensible phenomenon, a mutable force that can be shaped by the movements of the body. The eurythmist senses how the living body determines space; just as the architecture of a dwelling determines an interior and exterior space, so does the eurythmist create space or as infinite numbers of possible spaces, for the eurythmist is both the architect and the architecture, alive and changeable, unlike the fixed materials used in dwellings.

As the artist learns to use space creatively, he or she must adjust the *sense of balance*. The forces of levity and gravity, right and left, in front of and behind reveal themselves as physiological and psychological realities. Every movement creates new relationships to these forces both within the body and in space. The way in which the soul can express itself depends upon these relationships, for body and space are its medium.

Through eurythmy the soul develops a new relationship to the body. It begins to reach into it and make it speak and sing. It begins to know the body as a *living, moving, touching organ* – a sense organ and an expressive organ of its invisible life. The body stands and moves in equilibrium amidst a world of viable forces.

When the body, through touch, life, movement, and balance, attains a harmony, the soul rejoices, for it feels its true relationship to the visible world. But the soul has a difficult task. It must become the stage for feelings greater than those of ordinary intensity. In speech eurythmy, the soul must become the poet's soul; in tone eurythmy, the composer's soul. Otherwise the poem or music will not speak or sing, but only the soul's likes and dislikes, only personal feelings will become visible. The soul's organs must be strengthened and enlivened so to aspire toward the true nature of verse and music.

This thriving for truth exercises the “consciousness soul. The harmonious interpenetration of body and soul yields a healthy sense of being. The sentient soul experiences this harmony that, by the way, is not always easily attained. The sentient soul must become an accurate organ, a true communicator of bodily sensations, as the positions of the body in space, to the I (ego). The effort to harmonize body, soul and spirit remains a goal for the developing eurythmist.

The senses of smell, taste, sight, warmth and hearing can only be discussed with regard to the soul. It is essential to remember that the soul is a unity in which three types of feelings interweave. These five senses take on new activities with regard to the soul. The eurythmist smells and tastes in a new way. These senses turn inward and expand into the soul. The atmospheres of soul life have a kind of smell and taste just as do gaseous physical atmospheres, only of a different nature. The soul experiences light, dark and colors; the eurythmist learns to see and to paint these. Also the soul experiences warmth and coldness of mood and feeling. The eurythmist must learn to sound within his or her soul, as has been indicated

already. These five senses are metamorphosed into “soul senses” (in addition to their ordinary activities), for the eurythmist must awaken within and learn to discipline the life of the soul

The *Ego sense* undergoes a wonderful transformation through eurythmy. The cooperation and coordination of eurythmists, of truly intimate moods of soul, requires a true sense of community. The success of any eurythmical effort depends upon its social structure. The *Ego sense* must become a “Community sense;” the sense of self (through ego consciousness) must become a “We sense.”

The Ego is the instigator of conscious human activity. The Ego is a spiritual activity – and activity of *pure will*. The will force surges through the nervous system culminating in so-called motor impulses, causing movement. The eurythmist must learn to order the transformation of *nerve activity* to *muscle activity*. In learning the elements of which a eurythmical composition consists, the eurythmist must be able to think clearly, but during movement, all the will activity is fully in the body. The activity of the eurythmist is fully present in every moment of movement. The life-body, in time, develops memory and a metamorphosed thinking activity. Through eurythmy, the spiritual in Man embraces the whole the human being.

The educative value of eurythmy is not limited to its own sphere of activity. Through his or her own experiences of movement and form, the whole world reveals its own – for all things are moved by their own forces or by forces exerted upon them. The eurythmist experiences the life of the human being and then its life within nature. The eurythmist is able through enlivened sense, feeling and thought, through metamorphosed will to enter into creating a world conception.

“The art of eurythmy is one of the channels through which the spirit is again revealing itself to human consciousness. It is a path through which man may again find a way to that self-knowledge which is also knowledge of the universe.”

Raffé, Harwood, and Lundgren, *Eurythmy and the Language of Dance* (London 1979), p. 27.