

The Complete

DISCOVER

EURYTHMY

“movement that speaks and sings”

by

John Ralph

This is the printer-friendly version of **Discover Eurythmy** (www.eurythmy.org.uk). This ebook contains all the information about eurythmy available online. More background information, further reading and resources are available online, with explanations of anthroposophical terms.

Discover Eurythmy aims to encourage more interest in eurythmy, to inform and support dialogue between enthusiasts, audiences and eurythmists, and to generate more questions!

"If a human being reveals through eurythmy-gestures what his being inherently possesses as language, and enables the entire soul experience to become visible, then the mysteries of the world may be artistically expressed."

- Rudolf Steiner

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AIMS

What is the aim of this art of movement?

The aim is to speak and sing through movements and gestures that reveal to the eye what language and music bring to the ear. The movements of the eurythmist reveal inner soul experiences and relate to the surrounding space. They can vary from simple hand gestures to whole body movements. The elegance and capacity for revealing the innermost experiences of the human larynx is extended to become whole-body movement. For this reason eurythmy is an original artistic movement discipline rather than a dance form.

“Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible.” - Paul Klee

Eurythmy answers the riddle: what does language and music actually look like? What we could previously only hear, we can now see in eurythmy. What is only heard is partly hidden so gestures have always been an important component of expression and communication. Language and music are made visible in eurythmy: as in the ear, so also in the eye. When eurythmy is at its best, we may see far more than we hear. At last we can see what the words look like, and watch an octave blossom through the medium of gesture and movement. we can see the difference between *great* and *grate*, between a harmonic chord and a dissonance. Words and music are not interpreted, the implicit inner qualities are displayed in their authentic movement, feeling and character.

The discipline of *visible speech* is quite different from the skills of *visible singing*. In *visible speech* the eurythmist uses gestures inherent in the vowels and consonants, moving spatial forms according to the content of the spoken poem or prose. By incorporating gestures that express soul moods, planetary and zodiac influences, the eurythmist also reveals what lives silently within the audible.

In *visible singing*, the eurythmist makes use of gestures for tones and intervals, making visible the pitch of the melody. The beat and rhythm can be shown as well as the harmony. The gestures are from the music as written in the score and shown in the character of the instrument playing. When the intervals between the notes of music are made visible, we can see what is inaudible in the music. Eurythmy combines with 'live' human speech and instrumental music. Electronic sources, amplification or enhancements are never used. There is no life in electronic sound sources and it is the life that a eurythmist attempts to show. For this reason there are no CDs of eurythmy music. (Music for eurythmy – page 10)

Compositions of pure eurythmy are sometimes performed that are unaccompanied by language or music. These are often profoundly meaningful for audiences and in my view are an essential contribution to the repertoire. Such compositions have been included from the early days, as preludes and codas surrounding spoken word choreography.

“Now all that can be perceived by supersensible vision, all that can thus be learned about the nature of these forms and gestures of the air, can be carried into movements of the arms and hands, into movements of the whole human being. There then arises in visible form the actual counterpart of speech. One can use the entire human body in such a way that it really carries out those movements which are otherwise carried out by the organs connected with speech and music. Thus there arises visible speech, visible music — in other words, the art of Eurythmy.”

- Rudolf Steiner (Lecture on Eurythmy)

There are a number of ways in which eurythmy is used beyond the stage. Eurythmy therapy addresses many types of illness. Eurythmy is taught to children in Waldorf (Steiner) Schools (see page 9) and in curative education and anthroposophical social therapy for those with complex needs or learning disabilities. Eurythmy also comes into the office and factory (Eurythmy in the Workplace – page nn) bringing a range benefits.

Doctors trained in anthroposophical medicine may prescribe specific eurythmy exercises to their patients. It is always necessary to have a personal referral from an experienced doctor before working with a eurythmy therapist.

DANCE & ORIGINS

Is eurythmy different to other forms of dance and movement?

Yes it is. Some people notice similarities in the quality of movement with oriental disciplines such as *Tai Chi* but the intentions of a eurythmist are quite different from any other dance form. Some Mystery Dances of ancient Greece had common elements, according to Rudolf Steiner, but there seems to be nothing that has survived. Perhaps eurythmy has some aspects in common with the traditions of movement-drama such as Japanese *Kabuki* theatre with its complex gestures that a knowledgeable audience understands.

In eurythmy the inner qualities of speech and song are made visible, not the feelings evoked by what is heard. The performer becomes the speech and the music so that the hidden inner life is revealed. This demands a high degree of skill and, in his time, Steiner often apologised that this new art was in infancy. Speech has its own laws, as music does, which eurythmists have to obey. These laws are found in our *etheric body* and eurythmy is thus an art of etheric movement. The vital, life forces that surge through our etheric bodies include the forming power of the zodiac and planets. These can be made visible through their corresponding eurythmy gestures.

It is perhaps one of the more perplexing aspects of eurythmy that eurythmists do not express the personal feelings or a response to the music by the choreographer, as is

frequently seen in modern dance. The eurythmical challenge is to move beyond personal limitations or disabilities, for the speech and music to become visible without any distracting technical shortcomings. In a similar way a piano player may develop the skill to allow the music of Beethoven sound freely without added artificial colourings of the player's personality intruding. The pianist uses a well tuned piano as a medium for music. A badly tuned instrument is an unwelcome distraction. The eurythmist combines the tasks of tuner and player, developing a mobile body as the medium for eurythmy as well as learning skilful technique.

The ability to overcome personal limitations in movement comprises an important aspect of the self-development of anyone who practices eurythmy, and this aim is integral to eurythmy's potential to therapeutically address disharmonies in our constitution.

Contemporary eurythmists have made tremendous efforts to make the movement as true to the eye as it is experienced by the ear. Modern music and poetry require new styles to be developed beyond the indications that Steiner gave and there is a vast amount of work going on to achieve in movement all the nuances that a speaker and musician can bring out. I feel that this experimental phase of eurythmy demonstrates that the baby of the arts has reached the full flood of adolescence.

One particular difference from many dance disciplines is that eurythmy relates strongly to the centre of movement that radiates from the area of the collar bone. Close to the heart, it invokes a very different experience of movement from when one moves from the lower abdomen, or *hara*, as is common in eastern martial arts.

By preparing themselves [for a performance] eurythmists become receptive for what is guided out of the spiritual world. In the case of the audience, the movements living in their astral body and ego are intensified through experiencing eurythmy movements in visible form. - Rudolf Steiner (Balance in Teaching: p 41)

How did eurythmy begin?

It seems that Rudolf Steiner had many new and revolutionary ideas that he wished to develop, but he would wait until somebody asked the right questions before developing and presenting them in public.

In 1912 the seed question came from Clara Smits who was looking for a career in movement for her daughter, Lori. Although Lori was only a teenager, Steiner began to introduce Lori to a new art of movement through exercises and imaginative pictures. Speech eurythmy was developed first and introduced into some scenes of Steiner's four Mystery Dramas. Visible singing developed much more slowly but, from the first performances, proved more popular with audiences than visible speech.

It soon became clear that eurythmy could be a health-promoting activity, and specific exercises for a wide variety of medical conditions were developed as *curative eurythmy* or *eurythmy therapy*.

In 1919 the first Waldorf School opened and eurythmy was introduced as an integral part of the curriculum. Like the whole curriculum introduced by Steiner, the eurythmy lessons develop through the school in tune with the development of the children.

BENEFITS

Does eurythmy have a therapeutic effect?

Yes it does. All the arts of movement promote health, although one may wonder at some of the excesses that are practiced in professional ballet. Eurythmy is particularly effective, being used therapeutically by practitioners who have done a specialised training in *eurythmy therapy* (curative eurythmy). The movements are adapted for specific conditions and ailments as diagnosed and prescribed by an anthroposophical doctor. Although some the exercises derive from gestures seen on stage, they are totally different in character, intention and appearance. The power of the specific movements work through the life body, or etheric body, to strengthen and harmonise where there may be illness or imbalance.

No individual therapeutic advice is available through Discover Eurythmy; you will need to consult a qualified anthroposophically trained doctor if you are looking for help. It is always necessary to have a personal referral from an experienced doctor.

Anthroposophical doctors and eurythmy therapists in the UK are registered under the Council for Anthroposophical Health and Social Care (CAHSC). Eurythmy therapists undergo an intensive training after completing the four-year foundation training in eurythmy.

“We should know that in our etheric body we constantly have the tendency to do eurythmy; it is something the etheric body of itself tends to do. It is really the etheric body that makes these movements, and it is only prevented from doing so when we cause the physical body to carry them out. When we allow eurythmy movements to be made by the physical body, these movements are checked in the etheric body but react upon us, this time with a health-giving effect.”

-- Rudolf Steiner (Balance in Teaching: p28)

What benefits can I expect from practising eurythmy?

There are many personal benefits to be gained from the practice of eurythmy. *Lay classes* in eurythmy are offered as introductions or well-being sessions in areas where there is a Waldorf School or Anthroposophical Medical Practice. Rudolf Steiner House in London runs a number of groups. I wish these classes were available everywhere. Such opportunities are often just too far away for people who express their interest to DISCOVER EURYTHMY to travel. It may also need a bit of encouragement and enthusiasm to get a group together. Such classes bring harmony and relaxation to the body, and stimulate spatial awareness and mindfulness that brings an ease and enthusiasm to participants. Moving to beautiful poems and music often adds new spiritual insights to the whole experience.

The most specific intervention for the individual is through eurythmy therapy. This requires the diagnosis and referral of a doctor, trained in anthroposophical medicine, who may prescribe specific eurythmy therapy. A eurythmy therapist then works with the patient, teaching and guiding the movement exercises.

Research in neuro-physiology confirms that there are intimate links between our movement and the development and stimulation of the brain. Many people experience benefit and wellbeing from regular movement and exercise in many forms and disciplines. Eurythmy therapy can be directed towards specific areas of the body or the physiological constitution in highly effective treatments for individual patients.

Eurythmy activity in business encourages better communication and enhances team-working skills and individual initiative at all levels of management as well as the workforce. This work is called ***Eurythmy in the Workplace***. (see page 9) It was originally developed in the Netherlands by Annemarie Ehrlich. It has been growing for over twenty years, and is now used worldwide.

I often work alongside courses in Higher Education and adult learning groups. Through the arts, it is possible to deepen the experience of almost any theme or subject. The *trinal method* (three-fold learning method) is used in curative education and social therapy trainings, combining theory, practice and art in a powerful synthesis. Eurythmy offers subtle and meaningful experiences that can enrich and transform learning.

APPLICATIONS

“Eurythmy belongs first of all to life as an art among the other arts.”

-- Rudolf Steiner

How is eurythmy used and applied offstage?

There are three main areas of eurythmy activity that are not purely artistic – therapy, education and social eurythmy. Eurythmy therapy and educational eurythmy lessons in Waldorf Schools began with the active support of Rudolf Steiner.

In Waldorf Schools or Steiner Schools, eurythmy is a part of the curriculum for all ages. The eurythmy lessons aim to foster healthy development of the pupils and to support the other subjects in an artistic manner. Some schools do not continue eurythmy in the upper school when pupils are not finding easy access to this art.

“The will initiative that is needed in present times - this is cultivated especially by means of eurythmy as an educational tool in schools.” -- Rudolf Steiner

Communities active in curative education, such as Camphill, have adapted the Waldorf Curriculum to the additional needs of children in their care. This is a specialised branch of work which is productive for all children, no matter what their ability. It is also used therapeutically for specific conditions and illnesses. Within many curative education communities eurythmy is also used

- as a medium to convey stories, myths and inspirational themes in a Religion Lesson for pupils who have limited access to the spoken word
- as a passive or active therapeutic medium for small groups, as an integral element in *Listening Space Therapy*, and *Colour Light Therapy*.

Adult communities working in anthroposophical social therapy often include eurythmy activity on a weekly basis, which may include elements of Eurythmy in the Workplace.

Eurythmy in the Workplace began much later with the work of Annemarie Ehrlich in the Netherlands. This is often referred to as social eurythmy as it not oriented to artistic performance. Eurythmists work in factories, communities and business organisations across all levels. The work brings people together in new ways, promoting initiative and creative adaptation to problems at work.

To summarise briefly, eurythmy is practised in the following areas:

- on stage, as a performing art
- as a therapeutic medium
- in Waldorf Schools, curative education schools and social therapy communities
- in organisations at all levels, from workers to higher management, to enhance team-work, self-management and decision making
- in well-being and recreational classes
- as an enhancement to studies and an aid to self-development in Higher Education and further training as part of the trinal method

What can eurythmy offer for children?

Everyone can benefit from doing eurythmy, no matter what age! Eurythmy was introduced into the curriculum at the founding of the first Waldorf School in 1919.

The lessons begin in kindergarten and develop right up to the twelfth class in tune with the maturing growth of the pupils. Elements of visible speech and visible song are progressively introduced at the ages when the children need them to support their physical, intellectual and emotional development. A balance is created with gym, spacial dynamics* and sports activities where the attention is turned more towards other fields of movement. In the upper classes, more awareness is added to the work of the early years and individual creativity is encouraged.

“In education we would need to explain how eurythmy brings the human being into a state of fluidity, so that certain things become manifest, so that the human being feels himself to be like a general expression of his inner life, for example an exact expression of his soul ... We would need to explain how eurythmy can influence every stage of education.” - - Rudolf Steiner

* see www.spacialdynamics.com/000002.htm for more on spacial dynamics

What is Eurythmy in the Workplace?

Annemarie Ehrlich's motto is 'art is what brings joy'. This is clearly reflected by the success that she and others have had in all kinds of working environments. *The Institute for Eurythmy in Industry, Business and Professional Life* was founded in 1986 in Holland. Many companies have benefited from an experience of eurythmy.

Problems have been given new perspectives and new insights in working together have emerged.

"eurythmy ... can become an important discipline in creating work environments of meaning and effectiveness." - Christopher Schafer

Groups have done daily eurythmy practise on the factory floor. Managerial staff have taken part in eurythmy as a part of their training and development. Interpersonal awareness is sharpened, and creative initiative is encouraged in such sessions. In Britain this work is often referred to as Social Eurythmy.

WATCHING EURYTHMY

What is the best way to watch eurythmy on stage?

I **recommend** viewing the stage as a whole, rather than focussing on specific eurythmists. Keep your eyes as relaxed and alert as your ears are when you listen to chamber music. It can help to try looking between the performers or just above their heads, rather than concentrating on individuals. Your ears can hear everything, even the details and nuances of a four-part fugue, and your eyes can learn to do the same.

At all costs try to avoid staring at individual faces (see page nn) – the meaningful movement is elsewhere. Look around the moving eurythmists and sense how their motion changes the space. Much of eurythmy is the sculpting of a qualitative landscape and it helps if you let your imagination flow through what you see.

The aim is to view the whole stage in whatever manner comes most easily to you, and you can watch individual performers for a while if your attention is drawn to them. It may be as important for eurythmy audiences to rehearse as for performers!

See Discover Eurythmy Ebook: **A Beginner's Guide to Watching Eurythmy**
(Available: www.eurythmy.org.uk/ebooks)

FURTHER INFORMATION

What else can I read about eurythmy?

A good introduction can be found in the book **Eurythmy: rhythm, dance and soul** by *Thomas Poplawski*.

An interesting account of the birth of eurythmy is in **How the New Art of Eurythmy Began: Lory Maier-Smits, the First Eurythmist** by *Magdalene Sieglöcher*.

Rudolf Steiner gave two lecture courses: Eurythmy as Visible Speech (now back in print) and Eurythmy as Visible Singing which are intended for study by eurythmists but are also fascinating for the interested lay person. Both editions now have extensive study material alongside the original lectures.

A good resource for eurythmists in Waldorf Schools is **Come unto these Yellow Sands** by *Mollie von Heider* republished in the USA. Also look at **Making Room for the Angels** by *Reg Down* from the USA. There are also a variety of collections of music suitable or composed for eurythmy lessons. These can be traced through anthroposophical bookshops.

There are articles about eurythmy in the online Steiner Archive (www.rsarchive.org). The lecture of 26th August 1923 at Penmaenmawr, North Wales is worth a look. See www.eurythmy.org.uk/html/resources.html for links to further online reading, including a list of books that refer to eurythmy.

How do you spell eurythmy?

In the early to mid twentieth century, the published spelling in English was eurhythmy, derived from *rhythm*. This has only survived in the spelling dictionary provided with Microsoft Office and in the older texts presented in the Rudolf Steiner Archive (www.rsarchive.org).

Dalcroze Eurythmics is something entirely different. (See the complete **Discover Eurythmy** for Dalcroze.)

In French it is eurythmie
In Dutch it is eurytmie
In German it is Eurythmie
In Portuguese it is eurytmia.
In Spanish it is eurythmia
In Sweden it is eurytmi.

Please let me know the spelling in your language.

How can I find eurythmy activity in my area?

If you live in the UK or Republic of Ireland, it may be possible to find out if a eurythmist lives near you. Try emailing the Eurythmy Association in Great Britain and Ireland (secretary@eurythmyassociation.org.uk). There are regular opportunities to learn eurythmy at Rudolf Steiner House in London (www.rsh.anth.org.uk).

If you live in the USA, contact the Eurythmy Association in North America (www.eana.org).

You may have to become quite creative to find local eurythmy events and classes in other countries. Researching contacts in other languages than English are beyond the scope of this writer.

All of these URLs can be found on line at www.eurythmy.org.uk/html/resourses.html

FINIS DEFAQ

ANSWERS to EURYTHMY ENTHUSIASTS

What music is suitable to accompany eurythmy?

Classical or folk music can be used for eurythmy. The important principle is that the music should be live. Recorded music draws on our etheric forces, and so absorbs energy if we would try to practice eurythmy to CDs or tapes. This can be experienced in the way tunes can get stuck in our minds, and repeat endlessly until we can completely digest and forget them. The German term for such a tune is an *ear-worm*. This effect is what sells popular music, as we hunger to be satiated by repetition of the stimulus. It is the same unsatisfied hunger that makes us go out after electronically amplified concerts and buy the recordings.

Our organism works differently in the case of live music, where we can be fed from the etheric forces that have reverberated into us from the instrument. The etheric forces resonate through the eurythmy and are thus amplified for the audience.

I would not recommend using background or mood music CDs or tapes to accompany eurythmy. It may appear like a good idea, but it is a distraction, and experience shows that reproduced music actually sucks out those very etheric forces that we would wish to enliven.

Most eurythmy music books contain piano music. This is because it has usually been easier to get a pianist to play for lessons and sessions. The piano is a very versatile instrument. Other instruments, well played, are just as good. The lyre is often used in therapeutic sessions.

A friend of mine once castigated a symphonic performance of eurythmy in the Goetheanum by remarking that he saw no more than he heard! There is a challenge to every eurythmist who ever raised an arm in song. Should the movement not be lifting the music rather than the other way round?

Has eurythmy been researched?

There have been some modest research projects. An interesting study of patients' responses to eurythmy therapy in chronic disease is published online at BMC Public Health. (www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/7/61) A teacher living near New York did an interesting thesis on how eurythmy might support youngsters broaden their verbal expression beyond a narrow repertoire of recycled clichés. Sadly she could not find a publisher. I have heard that someone in Europe investigated whether the life span of eurythmists was longer than normal. The results were not too encouraging for prospective eurythmists!

Actually every eurythmist is a researcher as performer, teacher or therapist and we are all learning as we do eurythmy. Reg Down, a eurythmy teacher in the USA, has developed new eurythmy figures for gestures that were not included in the set of figures designed by Rudolf Steiner. Reg's work has been published in the Newsletters of the Eurythmy Association of North America.

Assumption check: I hope we are all purposefully continuing to learn as eurythmists! Graduates of eurythmy trainings are sometimes referred to as *finished* but I think it would be more accurate to say we are *started*. I have been a started – and startled – eurythmist for 19 years, and I am certainly not finished yet. Even the postgraduate trainings for eurythmists are not finishing schools!

There is too little motivation – or time – to publish everything we learn about eurythmy. The *Rundbrief* (published by the Section for Eurythmy, Speech and Music at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland) often has intriguing articles based on profound experiences of eurythmy. The *Rundbrief* is available to eurythmists who are members of the School of Spiritual Science. Many of the articles are of wider interest, and I suggest that it would be a service to the development of eurythmy if such articles could be made available on line. For those who would like to develop their kinesthetic sense of eurythmical experience see the Discover Eurythmy Guides to Developing Eurythmical Experience (forthcoming page nn).

Neuro-physiological research has spawned Brain Gym© which includes movement exercises for children that are surprisingly close to eurythmy exercises. Maybe there is more research of interest to eurythmists?

Discover Eurythmy would like to become a central point of reference for those involved in eurythmy research. It is vital for researchers to be able to find one another. A wide readership finds DEFAQ through internet search engines and *Wikipedia*. A number of good students have asked me about eurythmy as part of their studies, but so far no returns... If you are involved in, or know of any research that has any relevance to eurythmy then please make contact.

Is there a connection between eurythmy and Dalcroze Eurythmics?

Did Steiner develop his ideas from Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (Dalcroze Eurythmics) or vice-versa? As I understand the way Rudolf Steiner developed the principles of eurythmy, he took his own observations and spiritual insight as the starting point, and scrutinised his experiences together with the eurythmists in training and rehearsal. He would choreograph a eurythmy form as a eurythmist improvised to the music *behind him*.

Steiner was definitely attempting to give birth to a new cultural impulse. He offered inspiration to other arts as well, such as architecture, painting, sculpture, speech and drama. I believe he was aware of other contemporary disciplines of movement and dance. A lot of creative development was going on at the beginning of the twentieth century.

I know very little about Dalcroze, but I guess he also observed and examined his own experiences of music. The common principles and inner lawfulness of music are bound to show up in both men's work. Whether the two were directly influenced by one another, I can only say that I have met with no direct evidence of it.

Why do eurythmists often look miserable on stage?

Have you ever looked at people playing an instrument in a classical concert? What do their faces portray? Concentration is often the most visible expression. If you consider that eurythmists are concentrating on playing their instrument then it is understandable that they are not grinning, gurning, or miming facial expressions.

In performance, a eurythmist may suffer from nervousness but is not usually miserable. Stage eurythmists are concentrating hard! The best performers will express so much with their instrument - the whole body - that you will not be distracted to look at the facial expression.

Hopefully the eurythmist's face can remain relaxed and in tune with the performance, but we are so used to examining the human face for clues to what is being expressed, that we get fixed on it and are not free to look further. Then it is our problem if we are not looking at the movement.

Good advice for watching eurythmy performances is to relax and listen with our eyes. We can easily become tensed up trying to decipher what is going on, so chill out and remember how you listen to a symphony!

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ANSWERS to EURYTHMISTS

Why does Steiner relate the larynx to eurythmy?

Rudolf Steiner asserted that *“in eurythmy the body becomes larynx”*. The question was asked by email: *Why the larynx? Why not any other organ such as an ear?*

What is so fundamental to speech and eurythmy movement? Was Steiner referring to speech merely as a metaphor for introducing eurythmy to the world? Let him speak for himself –

I would like to say that what we can call the Art of Eurythmy is not made of arbitrarily invented gestures, but has been taken over from a natural movement tendency in the human larynx and its nearby organs, from all the organs that take part in the forming of sounds. These movement tendencies in the larynx and other organs are then transferred to the whole human being. In this silent language of eurythmy, accompanied by speech or music, man as a whole performs like a larynx, so to speak. He becomes a larynx in the movement shown on the stage. In the same way, groups of eurythmists become a larynx. It is a little more difficult to find one's way into the eurythmy, because the movements are not arbitrary, not a combination of momentary gestures, but a taking over of unnoticed movements underlying the sounds in speech and making them visible.

– Rudolf Steiner: 21 March 1920, Dornach: Address for doctors, with a performance by children – *The pedagogic-hygienic significance of eurythmy*

This answer is only a beginning. What does the ear contribute to the work of the larynx? What defines the outer limit of each organ's activity? It is clear that the ear depends on the active receptivity of the larynx, and that we could not hear speech properly without the synchrony of the larynx. See William Condon's research on this phenomenon. (www.edu-cyberpg.com/Literacy/whatresearchCondon.asp)

What does the instrument of a eurythmist do? It speaks in movement, and in speaking listens. The larynx is metamorphosed outwardly – becoming visible – and the ear is internalised as the eurythmist's kinesthetic experience, and sometimes as entrained somatic sensations in the actively observing spectator.

The larynx is not complete without the capacity of another's ear to sensitively receive its sounding voice. The human ear is not sufficiently able to distinguish the sounds that constitute words of human speech, according to Steiner. He asserts that we need the skill of the Genius of Language, an archangel, to distinguish the sounds of speech.

(Wisdom of Man, of the Soul and of the Spirit: Lecture 2. The full text is online at wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/WisdoMan/19091025a01.html)

To the question, what is movement, Steiner answered, "*If you want to understand movement, study speech*". Does Steiner imply that all movement is speech? If that is so, eurythmy can be seen to serve the Genius of Language in making the archangelic movements of language visible for all to see. Can we therefore imagine that in hearing speech, an archangel leans down and reaches into us so that we can hear the phonemes, the characteristic sounds of speech? In eurythmy we imbue the whole body with the movements of archangels. The whole takes up the task of the part. The larynx is revealed as the dancing ground of archangels.

What is the role of silent eurythmy interludes?

This question was initially related to planetary and zodiac gestures in the silent *auftakt* (prologue) at the beginning of a eurythmy presentation and the silent *nachtakt* (epilogue) at the end. The silent interludes and additional gestures of silent emphasis that intersperse the eurythmy also come into consideration here.

I shall use nourishing images to convey these ideas. A eurythmy performance feeds us the Bread of Life and the silent eurythmy is the Water of Life.

A good meal may begin with a cleansing aperitif. The role of the silent eurythmy before a presentation is to open the inner curtain and set the mood, indicating the soul landscape in which the speech will build its creations. What is about to happen? Where are we being taken to now? Can we find our inner orientation in these moments of preparation? In my view, it is good to inspire an audience with questions to encourage their inner participation. Obviously this participation is more usually unconscious attunement than conscious accompaniment. The nagging feeling of missing out on something important often arises during the moments of a performance when the audience cannot unify what they see with what they hear. Silent eurythmy is easier on the eye as the ear relaxes.

At the conclusion of a eurythmy presentation we may close the curtain gently with a silent, sometimes dramatic, epilogue. The audience is left to digest the subtle after-image of their experience. What was that? What happened here? Where have we been? Silent eurythmy then helps the audience to inwardly let go, so that the after-image arises and then allowed to sink down into the underworld of digestion. An epilogue helps us wash down the final mouthfuls before gently removing the empty light-filled plate and closing the inner curtain.

Although the silent eurythmy has its place alongside music and speech, my experience is that silent eurythmy often speaks even more strongly to an audience than the eurythmy of actual speech and music. Completely silent eurythmy presentations are very palatable to audiences. People feel that they are in the presence of the Mysterious and are able to disengage their peppery intellect more easily.

Are eurythmy gestures different for left handed people?

From my understanding and personal experience, there is no difference in the gestures of eurythmy for those of a left or right orientation. They are objective in the way that a left handed guitar should produce the same sound quality as a right handed guitar.

This question plagued me at the beginning of my training as I am ambidextrous. The deeper question is whether the experience of the gestures will be the same for a leftie as a rightie, and I can only say that I do not experience it to be so. It would be worth investigating among varying-handed eurythmists to see if personal experiences are any more individual than between a group of only right-handed eurythmists.

If a person is left handed it shows as a dominance on one side - the left - that affects the way a person relates to the world, perceptually and affectively. Many folk have cross-dominance of hand, foot, eye or ear. Objectively, the heart is swung to the same side as in a right-handed person and there are no physical or obvious psychological abnormalities to be seen. Having stated that, I can experience that left-handed handwriting often shows variation according to emotional states, as my former work colleagues often delighted in pointing out. Right-handed handwriting remains relatively consistent, so if I am feeling a bit dishevelled I always write on the right.

Supplementary Notes on Anthroposophical Contexts

Explanatory notes on topics mentioned in **Discover Eurythmy**. Before the daughter – the mother and father; before eurythmy – Anthroposophia and Rudolf Steiner.

"It is the task of Anthroposophy to bring a greater depth, a wider vision and a more living spirit into the other forms of art. But the art of Eurythmy could only grow up out of the soul of Anthroposophy; could only receive its inspiration through a purely Anthroposophical conception."

-- Rudolf Steiner

What is anthroposophy?

There are many definitions of anthroposophy – literally: *human wisdom* – and here is mine. Anthroposophy is a sensitive practical ethical activity. The aim is to work in the world towards the highest ideals that an individual can recognise through spiritual insight. Spiritual understanding is translated into good and practical purpose. Some people dismiss anthroposophy as a library of knowledge bequeathed by Rudolf Steiner, but I see it as the ongoing endeavours of all who embody spiritual ideals in ethical co-creativity. Anthroposophy lives in our initiative. Steiner showed us what is possible.

How does one gain spiritual insight? Rudolf Steiner wrote a basic manual for anyone aspiring to replicate his spiritual research – **How to Know Higher Worlds**. These methods are supplemented in several of his other books and in many of his lectures. The essential needs of our time require spiritual ideals of global responsibility that transcend national or racial differences. In this context anthroposophy has many friends in spiritually striving peoples around the world.

"Anthroposophists have a need to find answers to certain questions about humanity and the world that is as urgent as the need to satisfy their hunger and thirst."

-- Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts)

Anthroposophy is an individual path of learning that leads the human spirit towards community with the spirit in the world. It answers the heartfelt need to truly understand what needs to be done in the world, and its existence is justified in how it satisfies that need. What moves us in life can become more real than the facts of our situation.

Rudolf Steiner's book **A Philosophy of Spiritual Activity** presents an ethical framework for such personally experienced ideals. Far from being an aloof intellectual, Steiner supported the practical initiatives of those who gave to him for advice. He embraced the creative arts and inspired their renewal as an integral element within the healthy development of our culture. Although Steiner's proposals of a Threefold Social Order have not found universal appeal, they retain a

remarkable relevance in the developing European and World society. A number of anthroposophical communities, such as Camphill, continue to live and explore these social ideals.

The insights that Rudolf Steiner conveyed as a result of his own spiritual research were always shared on the understanding that they would be tested in active life and verified by anyone who took up his suggestions. There were never any commands from 'on high' and personal freedom was fully respected, each person being encouraged to act out of their highest ideals.

In anthroposophy we are free to choose how we take up spirit work in the context of our life experience. The vocation of Eurythmia, daughter of Anthroposophia, is no exception. I believe that it is a core task of eurythmy to raise our awareness to the spirit that moves through all things.

Who was Rudolf Steiner?

Rudolf Steiner (1861 - 1925) was born in Austria. From his youth he was aware of the elemental beings in nature and he trained and refined his spiritual observation to enable him to make objective studies of spiritual life and also to propose a method of spiritual development (How to Know Higher Worlds) which is suited to the modern western constitution. Respecting the traditions of the past, he pointed towards future tasks within the challenges facing humanity. He brought a disciplined rigour to the investigation of spiritual worlds.

'I never speak of anything spiritual that I do not know by the most direct spiritual experience.' (Rudolf Steiner: letter of 1903)

Rudolf Steiner began his public spiritual teaching in the most suitable environment he could find at the time – the Theosophical Society. His spiritual insights brought him into conflict with the theosophists when Krishnamurthy was proclaimed as the reincarnation of Christ. He could not countenance such a claim and quickly departed from those circles. Steiner often spoke of the essential role of the being of Christ in human evolution. He continued to develop his work independently under the name of anthroposophy.

He worked with others in specialist fields, giving new directions from spiritual principles in Education, Medicine, Architecture, Biodynamic Agriculture and the Arts. The new art of eurythmy developed in 1912.

In 1923 Steiner founded the General Anthroposophical Society which has its headquarters at The Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland.

What is an etheric body?

We all have a 'life' or etheric body as one part of our constitution. Plants and animals also have an etheric body but minerals do not. Our etheric body keeps our physical corpse alive and binds the soul or astral body to it. The life processes and forces in our etheric body heal and maintain our physical body, and can also be recognised within language and music. The Word that created us keeps us alive through etheric forces.

I like to think of it as the *vital body* or *organ of enlivenment*. When we sleep, the physical and etheric bodies are free to regenerate while our soul and spirit dissociate from our physiology. The etheric body progressively detaches from the physical body at death, during the time when the various organs can still be successfully removed for transplant operations. When that etheric spirit that enlivens the body has departed, all it decays as the world's ether forces take over.

The etheric body is described in depth in a lecture by Rudolf Steiner: **The Cosmic Word and Individual Man** (wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/CosWrd_index.html)

Four-fold Constitution of the Human Being

The human constitution, according to anthroposophical spiritual science, can be considered as having four distinct members. These are the physical body, etheric or life body, astral or soul body, and the ego organisation.

The physical body remains as the corpse after death. It has solid, fluid and gaseous elements, and warmth.

The etheric body is the totality of the life forces that activate, heal and maintain the physical form. Our nourishment not only provides physical substance but also sustains our life forces. The etheric body has a fluid nature.

The soul, or astral body is the bearer of experiences, our inner life. Its threefold nature comprises thinking, feeling and will. The astral body has a gaseous nature.

The ego the self or the I is the spiritual human being who experiences and penetrates into the human constitution, remaining partly awake and partly beyond normal consciousness during earthly life. The ego is not our selfish enemy in anthroposophy. This term is used specifically to refer to that part of our being that has the capacity to develop and transform the soul. What the I has made of the soul, etheric and physical in childhood and youth become the I-organisation. This continues to develop in healthy adult life as the self-made individuality, existing in warmth.

As we sleep, the physical and etheric components of our constitution separate from the soul and spirit, reuniting on waking.

The Three-fold Human Constitution

Anthroposophy views the human being from a variety of perspectives, having body, soul, and spirit.

The organisation of nerves and senses supports our perception and thinking.
The middle system of rhythmical breath and blood supports the feeling life.
The metabolism and limbs combine to support our active will.

The spirit can be seen in terms of consciousness. Our varying levels of awareness can be broadly clustered into wakefulness, dreaminess and sleep. Unconsciousness and coma can be considered as profound levels of sleep. Our feelings are generally more changeable and dreamy than our thinking. Higher levels of consciousness are also threefold. Steiner calls them Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition.

What is Waldorf Education?

The first Waldorf School opened in 1919 in Stuttgart. A curriculum was developed by Rudolf Steiner that organised the main subject lessons into a sequence which supports the healthily developing child. The sensitivity of the teachers leads them to tailor the curriculum to the receptivity of the classes. At best this work offers a natural therapeutic progression towards robust adulthood and individual self-actualisation.

Eurythmy is an integral part of the curriculum with specific indications for all age groups including aspects which support the various main lesson themes.

A great place to look at all questions Waldorf is Waldorf Answers.
See the Waldorf Curriculum for home schooling.

Steiner and Waldorf Schools in the UK are linked to the Steiner Waldorf School Fellowship. Contact details of schools are available through SWSF.

What is Anthroposophical Medicine?

With the help of Dr Ita Wegman, Rudolf Steiner developed new remedies based on a spiritual understanding of the human being. The breadth of this original approach to complementary medicine is beyond the scope of **Discover Eurythmy**. Anthroposophical medicine is practised alongside and in addition to conventional medicine. There are various artistic therapies used, including eurythmy therapy, for which Steiner gave extensive indications. Anthroposophical Therapeutic Art has a different approach to Art Therapy, using specific qualities within the medium, forms and colours.

What is the trinal method of training practitioners?

Theory, practice and the arts make three. The training of anthroposophical curative educators and social therapists has shown that the arts make a significant additional contribution to learning in these fields. The integration of theory and practice is leavened and deepened by suitable artistic activities that promote creativity and initiative that leads to new insights in a complex learning environment. Individual reflection on ideas and experiences ties the knot that binds these three.

Other aspects of adult education in relation to personal life processes and destiny are considered by the New Adult Learning Movement (NALM).

Discover Eurythmy is here to help you.

These answers are accompanied by comprehensive internet links and additional information on line at **www.eurythmy.org.uk**
