

FOR THE OPENING OF THE PART-TIME COURSE OF THE LONDON COLLEGE OF EURYTHMY IN FOREST ROW September 21, 2001

We are living in times when a desperate battle is playing itself out around us, strife that is sure to have a powerful impact on us all. Under the circumstances, your decision to make eurythmy a priority in your lives takes on increased significance. Though you may still feel tentative, or uncertain about where this intensive work may be leading, you have chosen to set out on a path of change, to make a positive effort to experience the life forces, the richness in the human soul, and the imprint of the divine in the human spirit and in nature. Your choice to emphasise the world of deeper experiences, which we tend to subordinate to life's demanding practicalities, is a meaningful deed against the backdrop of the present world events.

When you begin to work in a sustained and conscientious way with eurythmy, you are not just learning to do things you couldn't do before, to move your arms so and so to express something. Eurythmy is not a sign language or another way to say something in movement that the poet expressed well enough in the poem or the composer in the music. If it were only that, I suppose it would still be enjoyable to do and to watch; but in reality, the eurythmy would be redundant if it did not lead the onlooker deeper than the surface correspondence between the heard and the visible.

What then does eurythmy do for the participant and for the observer? What does it offer as an art, as a way to heal humankind?

When you begin to do eurythmy, your first experience is that you simply feel more alive, because you unite with the forces of life and growth in yourself. Then you begin to differentiate the experiences of lightness and weight, backward and forward, light and dark, and struggle to attain the uneasy balance between the contrasts, which is the growing point of creative activity. Everything artistic and creative in human life as in nature, takes place here: between, where the life is, a moving here and now, the experience of the gesture of the moment.

Then too, the power of imagination is strengthened. We discover that our inner activity is visible outwardly, that we can express through imaginatively penetrated movement the powerful inner experiences, the changes and movement in poetry or music. The inner life in all its diversity becomes manifest through the movement of the human form.

And then arises the intense desire to enrich this inner life, to increase our spiritual awareness and to rise to the vision of the artists, philosophers, and spiritual leaders of mankind.

This effort to be *whole*, to be one, in body, soul, and spirit, with what is highest in the human being, this is eurythmy; whether it is oneness with a single element, with an *A* or the interval of the third, or with the inner movement of the sounds, moods, rhythms of an entire poem or composition. The moment this oneness is achieved, the audience is lifted into a world of possibility, in which the beauty and power of the invisible world becomes visible and affecting through the agency of the human being.

There are those who can perhaps perceive this on their own. In our time, however, when language has fallen and we have forgotten its transcendent function, when musical feeling is diminished and needs cultivation, when the patient following of a process is counter to media-inculcated habits of inattention, the art of eurythmy leads us into the reality of our truest life experiences: it stimulates the life body, enlivens the soul, enhances spiritual perception and so contributes to the enrichment of cultural life.

This is an awakening of an aesthetic experience, but it is also a healing, a making whole of humanity which is torn now in so many directions, struggling for a way to understand and simply to live in a divided, divisive world. Eurythmy brings healing into this world not by bringing together what is divided in a culture that looks only for physical solutions, but by cultivating awareness of, *and actually participating in* forces of becoming which mediate the entry of spiritual forces into our lives.

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