

Introduction

Over the years I have discovered a sense of guidance while being made aware of something: Why now, and not years ago? There is, or can be, a reason, which I am beginning to trust though do not necessarily understand.

I recently came across a reference ‘see page 306’ in the 1974 edition of Annemarie Dubach’s *Basic Principles of Eurythmy* that made me aware that there was a later edition than mine printed in 1928 (from which the English edition was translated). And this later edition contained the following pages. I do not remember anyone ever mentioning anything about this additional material.

The content as such is not new to me, but I find these words in print from such an authority are an elixir, during these times when materialism, philistinism, political correctness, and the use of acronyms is rampant. I find these gentle and sometimes not so gentle reminders of the presence of the soul and spirit such relief and inspiration. It is not that we go back — that is not possible and not necessarily to be encouraged, but this can serve as a source to remind and hopefully to animate us to find ways and means to deepen and strengthen our work *now* in our present situation.

Forty years ago, I might have read these words with casual interest, whereas today my heart leaps up with enthusiasm and spurs me on to make them available to others.

Thank you to Melissa Lyons for her help with typing and editing.

— Dorothea Mier

Basic Principles of Eurythmy

by Annemarie Dubach

1974 edition, pages 287-318

Translated by Dorothea Mier

Stimulations and New Exercises

“Consider the ‘what’ but even more so the ‘how’”. These important words from Goethe’s *Faust* apply as much to eurythmy as they do to the other arts. It is not sufficient to do the eurythmy exercises, the sound gestures, the movements for the forms merely outwardly ‘correctly.’ It is also not sufficient that in group pieces, which come to be performed, everything ‘works,’ or is said, they are ‘well-worked-out,’ and not even that new material, new *themes* are included in eurythmy performances. The *how* of the performance is decisive. And this *how* must be recreated productively and ever anew in *every single* eurythmist. This requires as a foundation a complete control of the ‘instrument’ – the Gestalt – so that this instrument can become an unhindered expression of soul experiences and spiritual lawfulness.

Rudolf Steiner has clearly told us what happens, what the consequence is, when the movement of eurythmy is not penetrated by the soul with real inner participation, when he gave the indication for the Hebrew word *Hallelujah*. He translated this sequence of sounds with the sentence: “I will purify myself from all that hinders me from beholding the Highest.” And at the same time, he said that each time one does it, one must fill oneself with this soul content; and if one does not do it, if one does it thoughtlessly and without devotion, then the effect of the exercise would turn into its opposite.

This expression, ‘turn-into-its-opposite,’ we also must take very seriously in regard to a further relationship. Eurythmy, when it is practiced without depth and inwardness, can indeed make one even more clumsy and less sensitive to beauty than one was before, especially when the intellect, the head human being, takes charge of the movement human being and lames the natural grace. During a rehearsal. Rudolf Steiner called out:” It would please me most if you could all take off your heads backstage!”

A great danger exists in this trend of intellectual eurythmy for the present eurythmy generation, in that there already is a eurythmy ‘tradition,’ and yet many different opinions concerning this tradition. The result is that with the younger eurythmists, the eternal anxious question arises: “How does one do it? Is this way right? Or this?”

We older ones had it easier in some ways. We experienced eurythmy as a gift of grace, a gift of God, laid in our hands by Rudolf Steiner so that we could *develop* it under the artistic guidance of Marie Steiner. We felt ourselves, so to speak, co-responsible. Hadn’t Rudolf Steiner himself said to Lory Smits as he showed her the first rod exercises, that she should try out and add freely as many variations and modifications as possible? And she handed on this advice to us, which was an incentive for us all to exert our forces of imagination (Phantasiekraft) in this field. It never occurred to us that one could just *learn* everything in eurythmy. Even if we knew little, we experimented — maybe not in relation to the ‘what’ but definitely in relation to the ‘how’ — and the fruit of this was that at least our imagination (Phantasie) and our judgement were kept awake.

If it is beautiful, then it will be correct, said Rudolf Steiner. So, we learned to make a picture of what we did, to consciously *look at ourselves*. And that is important. But this point could be misleading. Therefore, I would like to quote from a lecture Rudolf Steiner held in Munich on January 11, 1912, in which he gave exercises through which one could develop the etheric body and astral body in a healthy way. In this lecture he also speaks about how useful it would be if, for instance, the human being really would look at his handwriting, if he would throw his gaze once again over the letters after he had written something. Many who have bad handwriting, said Rudolf Steiner, would improve their handwriting this way. And then he continued: “But there is something else good to do as an exercise. That exercise is, when one only tries to look at oneself, how one walks, how one moves one’s hand, moves one’s head, the manner in which one laughs, etc., in short, when one attempts to make a pictorial account of one’s gestures. Very few people, you see — you can convince yourself of this through sufficient observations in life — are aware of how they walk; only the fewest have an idea of how they look when someone fixes an eye on them while they are walking. But it is good to do something about it, to gain an idea of it. Quite apart from the fact that we certainly would correct a lot, if we would employ such things in our lives, there would also be an amazingly beneficial effect on the consolidation of the etheric or life body as well as control of the ether body through the astral body. One also needs to be aware that this should not always be continued, otherwise it will cultivate conceit. And the human being gains, if only he observes his gestures, if only he beholds what he does, if only he makes a mental image (*Vorstellung*) of his actions. The result, the usefulness of this, is that the command of the astral body over the etheric becomes ever stronger; that means that the human being is in a position, if and when necessary, to suppress something.

If this monitoring, the pictorial imagination of one’s own actions, is important for normal daily gestures, how much more it is for the artistic eurythmy gesture. This must not be mistaken for an outward or external mirroring of oneself. It is just the opposite – a consciousness is necessary that can only be achieved through exerted and strained concentration. Rudolf Steiner had already clearly explained this process also for actors in his discussions in *Magazin*. And in Lecture 15 of *Speech and Drama*, he speaks about this: “I have explained the relationship that an actor should have to his role. It must be objective for him. He must feel it as something that he has himself created and formed; and yet all the time he himself must be there in his own form, standing beside the form he has created. And then this creation of his can fill him with joy and plunge him into sadness, just as truly can events and doings in the world outside.” (p.333)

This ‘standing beside oneself,’ one can also experience as a eurythmist, as though an onlooker, having detached oneself, standing above or behind oneself, perceiving and directing every movement in space, every gesture clearly, as though in an overly exact picture. It is absolutely necessary to separate oneself, so that one can behold oneself from outside like a foreign object, as though from a spiritual background. The movement must be *found*, out of an inner necessity — never from without — but then with the fashioning (*Gestaltung*) one must have an objective image.

It is to be remembered that Rudolf Steiner did not appreciate it when eurythmists looked at each other when practicing and criticized or gave good advice. Without appearing immodest, I must say that it made sense to me why he did not like this. How can a really artistically productive mood arise when one talks, advises, possibly even argues about matters of taste, deliberates the pros and cons, and altogether relies on someone else? Concerning this matter, we find a very important explanation in one of the Building Lectures, which Rudolf Steiner held in the Glass House in 1914. It says in the Fourth Lecture (“True Aesthetic Form Principles”): “I

believe that, despite the fact that the feeling can easily arise, that as regards real, true art, ‘there is no disputing about taste’, nonetheless that is an incorrect statement. Fundamentally, one can argue about everything, even mathematical principles. When one mathematician works out a principle and comes up with a different solution than another, naturally one can argue; the argument can even become vehement, but one of them has made a mistake. Now that mistake is of course not so easy to discern in the case of beauty, in the case of art; but the human being can work through to a conception through which it can become clear that that which is artistic in a higher sense has fixed laws and forms, even forms which are well-grounded within the deeper essential laws of the cosmos.”

In reality, one’s taste has nothing to do with beauty and its ‘fixed principles and forms.’ “Beauty is everything purely developed,” says Hamerling in his dissertation on the beautiful. It would belittle Eurythmy, if one would measure it with the yardstick of taste.

I once heard Rudolf Steiner (during the beginning of eurythmy in 1918 in Munich, when a woman made the suggestion to introduce eurythmy lessons in a school for girls. Dr. Steiner answered, to all of our amazement, that he did not want “Our poor eurythmy already to be introduced into the land of philistinism.” In a similar way, his often somewhat dissatisfied expression could be construed, when he had to see how the artistic eurythmical tasks led to gossip and discussion, instead of concentrated and intensive exploration of spiritual lawfulness worked through by each individual. Once during a rehearsal for the “Rockspring Wonder”, when we were caught up in the endless discussion and agreements about where and when one should be, he interrupted with, “If each one would do their form correctly, then it will go together!”

The teachers, which we always have, are precisely the eurythmy forms, which he himself had drawn. If we immerse ourselves in meditative devotion into these forms, they will educate our artistic feeling.

It has always been a question for me, whether we have not taken too easily for granted, that we have had the right, after Rudolf Steiner’s death, to produce eurythmy forms ourselves. Certainly, he has given us the laws according to which to draw them. But when one considers what deep and mysterious wonders of the etheric world are contained in the forms he drew, then one is overcome by a feeling of deep responsibility when drawing the forms. In any case, it seems to me that eurythmy students, before they approach freely drawing (their own) forms, should have in their minds not only the rules for thinking, feeling and will forms, but also through tireless practicing of the *Apollonian forms*, and should have acquired a eurythmic-aesthetic feeling and judgement which never leaves them; as well as a sense for the ‘upwards bearing force’, which Rudolf Steiner once spoke about in a different but similar context, which permeates the form and holds it floating aloft in space (or in this case on the piece of paper).

But above all we must not forget that Dr. Steiner expressly emphasized that he did not want us to draw Apollonian and Dionysian forms ourselves for texts for which he had already drawn forms (which had already found their final and unique form). The best and sure way, in my opinion, would be *learning by heart* and *being able to do* as many solo and group forms as possible drawn by Rudolf Steiner’s hand. But they should be prepared not only for specific occasions but also so that, for instance, one could say: “Show the poem “Die Grenzen Der Menschheit” by Goethe, or ‘Charon’ or the Luna Form from the second scene of *The Souls Awakening*, or anything else, and one would be able to do it off the cuff.

Something similar is expected quite naturally of music students. Why should it not be possible for eurythmy?

I can relate from my own experience that I have continuously practiced a few eurythmy forms for many years, for instance, “Das Göttliche” by Goethe and the “Sommerbild” by Hebbel — which after many years I picked up again, and to my astonishment, I was able to show it offhand in a lesson. There is nothing to be compared with this bringing back the form from memory. One experiences, I would like to say, the flowing together and agreement of the eurythmy form with the form and force of one’s own etheric body, which one senses much more actively than would be the case if one had worked eurythmically just recently with the form. With this method, one goes more into the depths than the widths. Before one is able to find something really new, one must come to the source.

In this manner, it also becomes understandable how the forms want to be grasped and understood, namely, as a continuously *changing* formation, never fixed. In such a group form, for example as Rudolf Steiner has drawn for Goethe’s *The Metamorphosis of the Plants*, just by looking at the forms, one can really understand the ideas of metamorphosis. How these formations interact (ineinandergreifen), touch fleetingly, draw together and expand, alternatively turn toward and away from each other, how the narrow lines with the words of the text soar to “enhanced to its height,” after which drawing together again with the “most delicate forms.” How for instance one of the forms begins with minimal movement, then gains in importance, crossing straight through the development, in order at the end, with the words “sweetly concealed in the womb, where is made perfect the fruit” to gather all the others together with an encompassing form — all these wonders of transformation within the eurythmy forms can only be grasped in arising and fading away. This is applicable to what Rudolf Steiner says about the perception of the etheric body as such: it can be as little fixed as the lightning flash; it is in perpetual movement; everything is being continuously changed. It is the same with the eurythmy forms.

And it would be a desecration of these forms, if one would, for the sake of convenience, in order to memorize them more easily, to compare them with anything graspable or utilitarian from the “land of the Philistines.” With such conceptions or images [such as ‘onion or banana form’] one would obstruct right from the start an understanding of the forms. When one needs a means of communicating when practicing together with others, then one should rather choose mathematical designations. Anything else would be a trivialization in a way and would cancel out the path which Rudolf Steiner indicated for eurythmy (and speech formation) — namely to redeem movement and speech out of their expediency and lead them back again to their archetypal meaning.

I would like to insert a memory here, told to me many years ago by a very old member who has since died. This woman, in whose house Rudolf Steiner often lived, was present at an anthroposophical Christmas festival. The Christmas tree was full of lighted candles, which were extinguished at the end of the celebration. Then everyone streamed to the exit of the little hall. Suddenly the electric light went out. People stood in darkness for a few minutes. Then someone suggested lighting one of the candles on the Christmas tree so that at least one could find the exit. But Rudolf Steiner decisively rejected the suggestion. He did not want that the light that had been burned as a sign of something of higher importance, would be so simply used for such a utilitarian purpose. I wonder whether many young people nowadays would have an understanding at all for such subtleties? In any case, it would be the eurythmists above all who should be guided to a heightened sensitivity through eurythmy.

The head, the sober intellect (Verstand) is very out of place in eurythmy. This is so even when it comes to the matter of an “interpretation.” (The productive artist does not have a “fixed interpretation.” And the path of eurythmy should lead from only interpretation to productivity.)

The *love* for the gesture and eurythmy form must create everything; the heightened love, that out of itself develops into a higher capacity. The word of St. Paul holds true also for eurythmy: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.”

Allow me to make an experiment, even if it is a very difficult one, about the inner experience that one can have when studying a eurythmy form, to speak at least an indication, even if this speaking remains only a stammering. Out of some of these forms one can read a spiritual-dramatic event. So, for instance, is the wonderful first solo form which Rudolf Steiner drew here in Dornach for the pen by Clemens Brentano: “Blessed, he who without senses/ hovers like a spirit over the water...” (“Selig, were ohne Sinne/schwebt wie ein Geist auf dem Wasser...”). This form, which should only be done as Vortakt and Nachtakt (the text with Apollonian forms), begins at the back, flowing as though from a spiritual background, with a harmoniously rounded loop slowly gliding to the center of the stage that spreads out in to a gently waving form (expressing both soul quality and duration) — “hovers like a spirit over the water...,” then withdraws itself again with a semi-circle back to the spirit. At this place Rudolf Steiner has written the words in the original (which also appears in the text) “dem Gott gleich” (“like God”) — and now the movement plunges into the material in a big evolutionary whirl, which ends right at the front. It is then wonderful to experience, how in the Nachtakt the same path is retraced in one energetic whirl; this time, through moving backward, makes it even more active, it goes back into the quiet bay where is written: “like God” – then, in gentle winding curves, a gliding through the elements back to the spiritual origin.

Rudolf Steiner intended, as he told a doctor in 1918, in order to develop eurythmy further, that ever more *silent* forms should be performed. He wanted to give mantras, which should be performed as eurythmic movement, without recitation. This path would lead into (einmünden) a eurythmic esoterism. The development then went in a different way. But, in a changed form, an esoteric deepening of the movement came about by means of the *eurythmy figures*. If one only considers, for example, and thinks somewhat *further*, what Rudolf Steiner said about the palpable air (fühlbare Luft), which the eurythmist should sense around the movement, and is expressed through the color and form of the veil and corresponds to the feeling quality in the sound gesture, there arises a deep connection with certain mysteries of Rosicrucianism. We read in *Rosicrucian Christianity*, Lecture 1 (Neuchatel, September 27, 1911), about a ‘substance’ the perception and working through of which was the aspiration of the Rosicrucians:

“The goal of the outer work was to investigate the illusion, the Maya of matter, and what lies behind it. Like the human being, the macrocosm as a whole has an etheric body, a macrocosmic etheric body. This is a certain borderline of transition from coarse to more delicate substance. We will think of the borderline of transition between physical and etheric substance. Nothing else in the world resembles what lies between physical and etheric substance. It is neither gold nor silver, nor lead, nor copper. It is something that cannot be compared with any other physical substance, but it is the essence of them all. It is a substance that is contained in all other physical substances, which in this sense may be regarded as modifications of it.”

*To behold this substance through clairvoyance, this was the aim of the Rosicrucians. The preparation and development of this vision was held to lie in enhanced strength of the moral forces of the soul which then made this substance visible. This substance was seen in very truth and discovered by the Rosicrucians. They discovered that it is present in a certain form in the universe, in the macrocosm, as well as in the human being. Outside in the world, outside the human being, they revered it as the great veil, the mantle of the macrocosm. And they saw it revealed within man himself when harmony prevails between his thinking and his willing. They saw the force of the will manifesting not only within the human being, but in the macrocosm too, for example, in thunder and lightning; they saw the forces of thinking operating on the one side within the human being and, on the other, out in the universe, in the rainbow, in the rosy glow of dawn.” (D.S. Osmond, translator. *Rosicrucian Christianity*, R. Steiner, Mercury Press, pp. 10-11.)*

Connecting these spiritual facts with eurythmy might appear rather daring. But if we remember that Rudolf Steiner once said: Eurythmists would become philosophers of nature in their later incarnations and think a great deal about the impersonal ‘It’ (Es, which is always done in eurythmy with crossed hands *above* the head), then this indication does confirm deeper connections.

And this “crossing over the border” between the physical and the etheric is very familiar to eurythmists. If and when the movement is truly penetrated with soul experience, then it does not remain physical, but rather, one clearly senses an invisible element in which one is active. The audience also can experience it. And as to how visible it is — meaning that the invisible is actually visible [able to be experienced] — depends on the degree of perfection and inwardness of the movement. In just such moments, one has the possibility, as the observer, to experience the unimagined future possibilities that lie in eurythmy, and to sense, with gratitude, that in single instances this happens already now before our eyes, that which goes beyond sense-perceptible experience, and also beyond every artistic sense-experience. These seldom-experienced impressions are then made possible, when the movements are performed with both the greatest naturalness (Selbstverständlichkeit) and looseness (Lockerheit).

In a rehearsal where we were practicing the TIAOAIT for the first time for a public performance, Rudolf Steiner said: “You must now practice that so long, that it becomes *automatic*; only then will it have an effect on the audience.” So only then does eurythmy really begin to do something for the audience, when the performer is released from every head activity, ‘automatically,’ that is, from the limbs, from out of the practiced habits, allowing the movements to flow completely naturally (of course, ensouled movements), allowing the forces of the etheric body to play unhindered.

In the *Speech Eurythmy Course* (Lecture 15) Rudolf Steiner states: “A true stage artist would never think that he has mastered a role before he has played it some fifty times. Not until the 51st time,” he believed, “can he really play the part, because it must have become second nature.” And in eurythmy to *second nature* must be added completely relaxed physical muscles. Certainly it is the highest ideal to produce (erzeugen) ‘character tension’ at the right places (but *only at these places*) — and there arise the most wonderful effects when here also the invisible, which is only the tension of the will living in the eurythmist’s concentration, makes an immediate visible impression on the audience even at a distance. But just around this consciously controlled tension of will, everything else must be *relaxed*. It is the same as with the

neighboring art of music. For a pianist it would be unthinkable to play with a stiff wrist. And no one would believe that fortissimo could come from an arm muscle in cramped tension. Quite the opposite, all muscles and joints must be relaxed ('shakeable') so that the power can come from the shoulder. It is similar in eurythmy. Only out of the conscious relaxedness of the muscles (into which the 'character tension' can be inserted in the right place) is it possible for a convincing force to arise, which works as though it is coming not out of the human being itself, at any rate not out of the little personal human being, but actually is coming from a higher self. For the manner of sound gesture movement for *Luna* Rudolf Steiner said: She should never become hard, but must always appear as though coming out of a loving abundance. This can be achieved only through quiet (Ruhe) and calm, which can be achieved from outside, out of the surroundings, from the space.

Here one can also think of dramatic eurythmy. I am sometimes asked whether this or that poem is considered and treated as 'dramatic.' This question always astonishes me. To begin with, the dramatic, if it is there, will be immediately perceptible, and secondly, we do not really have a delimited category under the heading 'Dramatic'; with specific laws.

But we do know that Rudolf Steiner gave the example of how to present a dramatic scene in eurythmy, namely the "*Devachan Scene*" from the seventh scene of the *Portal of Initiation*; he indicated the few sounds — I U A [Philia I, Luna U, Astrid A] — that should be repeated variously during whole sentences, and in various zones and soul moods (Haltungen): *call, longing, knowledge, communication*. [In my understanding, this is for those listening, not speaking]. From this can be deduced — and one can come to it through extensive independent searching and trying out over time — that in eurythmy, when it is a matter of dramatic expression, economic, spare movements are the most effective, not the other way round. This one can also gather from comments Rudolf Steiner made in May, 1923 in Oslo in the lecture, "Anthroposophy and Art" [in *The Arts and Their Mission*]. There it says: "Now eurythmy has two aims. It stands in the middle between Dance and the Art of Gesturing..." (Gebärdenkunst). And further: "Mimic art is chiefly a support of the spoken word. If the need is to express something for which words do not suffice, man supplements the word with gesture; thus arises mimic art. It expresses the insufficiency of the words standing alone. *Mimic art is indicative gesture*. [A. Dubach's emphasis].

The art of dancing arises when language is forgotten altogether, when the will manifests so strongly that it forces the soul to surrender, and follow its body, which dictates its movements. The art of dance is *sweeping, ecstatic gesture*. [A. Dubach's emphasis].

We may say, mimic art is indicative gesture; the art of dance, sweeping, ecstatic gesture. Between the two stands the visible speech of eurythmy which is neither indicative nor sweeping but *expressive gesture, just as the word itself is expressive gesture*. [A. Dubach's emphasis].

Based on the example of the scene already mentioned, a transition from pure eurythmy to mimic art can be considered, and it clearly appears that gestures are more sparing, and need to be more *indicative*, the nearer one comes to the area of the neighboring mimic art.

And now, in order to come to really expressive gestures, it will be good to immerse oneself, especially while practicing, in a detail, instead of making unnecessarily numerous and restless movements. For instance, an effective exercise, in order to bring expression into the feet and into the stepping [Schritt], is when you take a poem you want to work on, allow it to be recited, and at first walk through the form with threefold walking. While doing this, try to put into the feet, into the walking, all expression and feeling that one can have from hearing the poem, as though the feet were the only organs one had to express everything one was feeling.

Arms, hands and head remain quiet and uninvolved, all concentration, all consciousness and all feeling [Emfindungen] are sent to the feet. That is when one becomes aware of what this means: “the word of my feet...” A wonderful example of this, for instance, is Albert Steffen’s poem: “Ich geh’ durch rote Äcker, es schläft der Keim...” (from “Wegzehrung”). (“I walk through brown-red acres, the germ still sleeps...” from “Bread of Life,” H. Monges, translator.) Or the lines from Schillre’s *Nänie*: “Siehe, da weinen die Götter, es weinen die Göttinnen alle...” etc. In this manner, the eurythmy form really will begin to be experienced.

How generally good it is to walk through all forms, including Apollonian forms, initially calmly and slowly with threefold walking. A great deal of what is cramped and unnatural falls away by itself. But one must endeavor, just in the places where the form *curves* in a new direction, to retain the stepping quite evenly — not suddenly drawing the foot back, as in the golden mean (Taktieren) [I imagine she means the half-step for the shorts] — only then do the curves become really flowing.

In order to achieve a beautiful gliding and flowing movement in walking, there is an interesting way via the elements. An example is when one imagines doing a form with lots of waves and circles; then does it with the hands as though drawing across the surface of the water. (We can omit the earthly element). It is altogether better to imagine the form at shoulder, chest level than on the floor. And one will notice how calmly gliding the form becomes. When one really is able to maintain the clear imagination (Vorstellung), one traces over the calm green or blue water surface with outspread flat hands. One can try to feel the green as color with the outstretched angle of the hand and lower arm.

The air element is livelier. For instance, for big curves that possibly end in a sharp point, or with broad swinging spirals (for example, in the form for Proemnon” by Goethe), you will know how to help yourself if you stretch out your arms as though they were the wings of a bird. Birds of prey are known to use air currents on which they allow themselves to be carried with quiet outstretched wings. Something similar should be felt (empfunden) with swinging (Schwungvollen) forms: that the air truly *carries*, “the feelable air.”

Then ultimately one comes to experience the forms as *traces of light* in space. For example, in the verses from the *Calendar of the Soul*, which are so difficult (so difficult that Dr. Steiner forbade us from doing them for quite a long time) — maybe the only possible way to manage to do the forms with the necessary power (Kraft) and with the *swing* that Rudolf Steiner especially wanted for these forms, is to imagine right from the beginning a beam of light — namely the path which the form takes, first as an imagination through the space, and only afterward followed with the body.

The imagination should always be ahead (vorausgehen). So when a form moves from the left side of the stage to the right, then in one’s thought and imagination one is already there before one has taken the first step. This is the only way that one comes to an experience of space. I believe that drawing the forms is the best exercise, lovingly devoting oneself to every detail, every fineness of the form; it lives on the paper as a work of art as well as in space, at least when it is perceived as alive and in movement.

A great deal of practice is required until one can draw not only exactly but with a really good swinging movement, so that the musical flow is never interrupted. Ideally the pencil should go down onto the paper only *once*, and at any rate the unavoidable new starting points should never be visible. The copying of the forms is an art in itself and should be practiced very consciously and carefully.

I remember that a eurythmist once complained that she had copied so many forms that the whole night though she had to continue drawing and could not free herself from it. To which Rudolf Steiner calmly responded: “Then you have *not yet* drawn *enough* forms.”

It was a wonderful experience to be able to observe how he drew, for instance, the forms for music. He had a piece of music played, and while he sat in his big wicker chair with the pad on his knees, surrounded by all of us listening, the pencil glided over the page with an awe-inspiring calm certainty. This is how these flower-like musical eurythmy creations came about, the most delicate and at the same time most energetic art of drawing possible, hovering as though released from the paper, the movement already in space, the musical flow, the dynamics of the rising and falling, clearly revealed to the eurythmist’s eye.

In the introductory words for the eurythmy performance of December 26, 1923, Rudolf Steiner explained more clearly than ever before, as to how the eurythmy forms came about. He said, “Just consider for a moment that you have a eurythmy form like the ones we sometimes have for poems, for instance, that are of such a depth of experience and design as those of Steffen; that such forms are best found, when one, let us say, has ten or twelve people of the present. They are all individually different as to their outer appearance [Gestalt]. But about each person one can say, the way their *etheric* body wants to move according to the poem. And then one figures out how the forms should be (are necessary, literally not arbitrary). Thus, eurythmy is entirely born out of the movement of the human ‘Gestalt’; but one must be able to come to the viewpoint that, if one is asked why a form of a poem is as it is, that one can say, it just is so. When one is challenged out of the intellect that one needs to justify the form, this makes one unwilling because it is inartistic. Eurythmy is created entirely out of feeling and can also be only understood through feeling.”

To some forms Rudolf Steiner also added head positions. He wanted the eurythmists to be able to master the movements and positions of the head. For that he gave very differentiated indications for individual poems. For instance, to nod one’s head [nicken] twice in specific pauses (for the comical poem: “To My Calf” by Fercher von Steinwand) or with head and gaze together alternately follow the index finger of the right and left hand with every movement (for the “Bandruidh” by Fiona Macleod), etc. All these movements with the head necessitate a completely loose, relaxed neck muscle. It is best to practice it without the form and sounds, because in that case they usually are made only vaguely and indistinctly, and therefore do not have a strong effect. But one should, for instance, try once with threefold walking, and at the same time (in this case according to an indication for ‘das Sommerbild’ (The Summer Picture) by Hebbel), with the first step, let the head sink down; with the second turn slowly to the left, and with the third just as slowly to the right; and continue thus, until the head acts entirely independently of the feet, becoming absolutely second nature with the movement, as though dreaming. Arms, hands, and the rest of the body should remain completely passive, only the feet and head are in movement. Only later one can add sounds, still with walking, and only after that, all together with the form. Without such patient preparation, really going into detail, it is not possible to bring these indications to full effect.

I am convinced that when, for instance, this poem, ‘das Sommerbild’ by Hebbel at some point really will be performed (which has never happened. I have done it previously, but in spite of all my efforts it remained approximate’). If these indications were to be really technically mastered; that means feet, head and hands, each one individually fulfilling its task *consciously as separately* as the voices in a Fugue each go their own way, then the audience would experience something completely new, never experienced before, in this case a dreaming, moving plant; and

in the second verse, which is more consonantal, something like a silent fluttering of butterfly wings, whereby the consonants need to be done far out [at the periphery]. In addition, it must really proceed as though in a dream. — “Consider the ‘what’ but even more so, the ‘how.’” (“Das Was bedenke, mehr bedenke Wie!”) The possibilities that lie hidden in the forms and indications given by Rudolf Steiner have hardly begun to be discovered or realized (ausgeschöpft).

Another indication that he gave concerning the *fingers* — namely, that everything done by the fingers has the deepest occult significance in eurythmy — could be explored further. It need not be limited to sounds, an A, an E, an I, to do with the fingers, but more generally, the consciousness could be directed much more to the fingers. Then you yourself would sense *how* important it is, what happens there. That every eurythmist is conscious and has absolute control, regarding whether the fingers are held quiet and close to each other, or more lightly or strongly separated, that should of course be the prerequisite.

A really serious engagement with the colors, for instance the verse from the *Twelve Moods*: ‘you resting, luminous glow’ [☉] always in the mood of ‘green,’ entails doing all the consonants with fingers together and flat hands — this ultimately gives a natural consciousness for how the fingers should be held at every moment (never arbitrarily). Beyond this, one can try to practice that, when forming the sounds, one intentionally sends one’s consciousness right out into the fingertips, and from there possibly radiating out (with the L for instance). One will notice that an etheric stream, which otherwise mostly stops at the wrists, really flows through the hand and through the outermost fingertips—and from these connects with the spirituality of the space. Out of this consciousness that is created, even new gestures can be found. Right from the beginning of eurythmy, Rudolf Steiner emphasized that we should endeavor to find ever-new variations, for instance for the sound S, etc. Naturally that does not mean thought-out ones, but rather that which comes out of the space consciousness (Raumbewusstsein), as if produced by itself. Also for the indications for the various *zones*, it is not sufficient to know in which space joy, pain, expectation, tension, fulfillment, etc. are done in eurythmy; rather, the foundation is to come to the clear cut *consciousness* of the front or back zone, that one truly imagines a real plane from above downward through the body, and at every moment with the consciousness one can switch from the space in *front* to the space *behind* this plane and vice versa. To attain this inner mobility, one can start off practicing this by standing in an ‘Ah’, with the angle of the arms exactly (sideways) in this plane. Then take a step forward, taking the arms with you, in the fixed Ah gesture, just a little *in front* of this plane, then a step backward and the arms likewise far behind the plane. Then do the same with two, three, (etc.) steps, so that every time, the arms are directed exactly correspondingly further forward or backward. With this exercise, one also learns to do this so that the movement comes out of the shoulder joint (whereby the head or neck muscle does not stiffen in resistance!). The step gradually should go over to a swinging movement, in a fashion similar to the way it is done in the therapeutic U exercise, in which all of the muscles of the feet must be active, only in that case it is done standing.

Here I would like to insert a correction and expansion of a statement I made previously in this book, where I did not explain myself thoroughly enough, which over time unfortunately appears to have led to a misunderstanding. In the appendix, I have presented a statement by Rudolf Steiner, where in every *release* (*Entlasten*) of the foot a ‘Luciferic revolt’ against the earth is to be seen, whereas resting on both feet expresses a purely *human* relationship to the earth. *But he added* that the standing on both feet is typical for the *third, ancient Egyptian* cultural epoch. That does not imply that we in the Fifth Epoch need to do the same. On the

contrary, according to all of Dr. Steiner's other statements, it is clear (for instance, already out of the fact that he indicated that the very elastic step of the first eurythmist, Lory Maier-Smits, was completely correct), that the *Greek* element, just the lifting and placing of the foot, should be taken up in eurythmy, even if it is a Luciferic element. Because the most important initial exercise in eurythmy, which has been emphasized again and again, arose directly from the Greek, having originally been an Eleusinian temple dance. One should walk with flatly placed feet only in representations of Egyptian scenes.

The more one observes people who want to come to eurythmy out of the conditions of present times, the clearer it becomes how necessary it is, before every practice, to begin with placing oneself consciously into the space. In this connection, the pedagogical 'Contraction/Expansion' exercise is a help. In this exercise lies the seed for everything that develops the eurythmist's relationship to space. The movement of contraction, of the drawing together of the arms, of expansion out into space (and namely in the widths, not the heights; so not above the shoulders; a warning always emphasized by Lory Maier-Smits); one can also have this done from the point of view of dark and light. When the students feel that the space around them becomes dark when the arms slowly. (*very* slowly) draw together, and how it brightens back up when the arms spread out (until far out, the light can be experienced raying out from the fingertips), then you are on the way to experiencing the space as something real — not only its bodily nature, but the *felt air*, the 'substance' that lies at the border between the physical and etheric. And into this substance, the sounds are sculpted — in this substance one also slowly feels, touches (ertastet) the right *transitions* from one sound to the other, that which makes the movement 'spiritually imbued', as Rudolf Steiner says in *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*, the currents on which one sound glides over content-wise and spiritually. This substance surrounds eurythmy like a higher element, in which the physical in the movement, and through the movement, becomes spiritualized.

Viewpoints for Teaching Artistic Eurythmy

At the beginning of the development of eurythmy, Rudolf Steiner gave advice along the way to the first eurythmy teacher, Lory Smits, that has remained in my memory from her own retelling: when a student makes *ten* mistakes, correct *one*.

One can ponder much about such a statement. At first, it seems to mean quite simply that the teacher should not confuse the student with too much correction. Added to this is the consideration that in those days it was usually a matter of large courses, mainly for beginners, who came tired from work with only the wish to be refreshed and harmonized by the effects of eurythmy. It was not a question of an artistic training. That gives the sentence its limitation right from the start. But, taking into account this limitation, it is extremely fruitful for the teacher to bear this foundational pedagogical principle in mind as a background for all one's teaching. Eurythmy should have a harmonizing effect on the participants, including those who, out of certain selflessness, want to take up the artistic as their task. Harmony and beauty will arise out of strenuous, hard work but never hurt out of haste and the resulting anxiety. One cannot superimpose the spirit of beauty as an afterthought. It must be actively there right from the beginning, with the simplest exercise. And for that one needs calm and quiet (*Ruhe*) and precisely this patience of the teacher, who can wait, until one mistake after another is overcome, as in [any] organic growth process; yes, there are those who consider it possible that a second and third mistake might possibly correct themselves out of the rightly grasped spirit of eurythmy. In the above-mentioned statement, there lies a great educational tool for the teacher himself. If he can silently see nine mistakes, in due course he will be able to grasp the being of the student silently and non-judgmentally. And then out of this being, out of the abilities and possibilities, and out of the mistakes and weaknesses of the student, he will be able to give his advice. He gives the lesson as an observer, not a judge. He reckons with the fact that a new side of every human being can be revealed through this art: a new eurythmy is born with every human being. Because – every time a different one – there is therefore a new instrument, with new, still undone possibilities, who perhaps can work their way out of apparent clumsiness. By means of the care in correcting and interfering there develops in the teacher the feeling for a certain balance that the student needs to acquire between self-assurance and self-critique.

In a similar way, a right balance needs to be sought as to how much the teacher is allowed to *give* to the student. In an art of movement, demonstration and imitation play a big role. But in eurythmy, it can be too much, because we are dealing with etheric forces that stream in the eurythmy movements, and imitation can occur where the student takes too much, and allows himself to be carried too much by these forces. When this happens, it will always lead to disappointments, because maybe what the student is able to do is success in the moment, but it has not been worked through by himself. The reason it is good to lead the student to ask questions is because in questioning works his own will to understand. In any case, the teacher must attempt to feel out the fine line where the independence of the student must begin.

One of the most important points in teaching is to convey a good method of practicing, because practicing is an art in itself. With other performing arts, for instance music, the methods of practicing are quite refined and sometimes worked out quite intellectually. One gets into such detail that it can lead to an atomizing of the work of art. That can never be the case with eurythmy, the reason being that the 'technique' is never an end in itself, but only a resulting side effect of practicing; because everything must flow out of inwardness, because it should grow, not be artificially cultivated. In eurythmy itself there lives an essential active force, which the

human being who trustingly devotes himself, grasps and remolds, works on it, so that it becomes a suitable instrument, not through what is taken in intellectually, but rather through what the eurythmy itself activates.

This consciousness, that everything intellectual and theorizing only hinders the eurythmy, must be present when practicing. And too much interrupting, talking to and fro, easily leads one out of the artistic sphere and, especially in practicing together, can be a very destructive element. Of course, the individual must become clear about his own difficulties and work on these. Intellectualism must be overcome, while striving for consciousness.

An important aspect is inner preparation for the practice. Rudolf Steiner frequently emphasizes this in *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*: that it all depends on the inner penetration of experience that lies at the root of the sound. And so also, with the forms. Merely a senseless repetition never brings the essential to expression. This essential – the Being of Eurythmy – can also not be active, cannot help, cannot correct, cannot support. The human being must bring himself to a state of being in which the Being of Eurythmy is able to work within its principles. And for that the prerequisite is calm and composure. And therefore, one understands that Rudolf Steiner emphasized that the whole learning process should be *slow*. This is because in the slowness it is possible for the beginner to approach the forces of eurythmy without letting the disturbing influences of the intellect and the head work into it. Speed in the movement should be the untroubled result of long, slow practice. If you force the tempo too quickly, then surely the head will be used, and then the calm breathing of the movement is lost, and it becomes inartistic and unsightly. For this reason, it is good during the lesson not only to practice single sounds slowly, in undisturbed peace, but also sound connections, whole words, lines, verses, as though every vowel and consonant were equally important and could take boundless time. Only this quiet out-breathing and by allowing the movement to resound in the space can bring the student to a real spiritual experience of what he is doing. Otherwise, it remains an anxious, rushed spelling. Because how can the movement of the arms keep up with the speed in which it is spoken? But if one starts slowly and sensibly, the result is a quite natural point of view for an artistic grouping of the sounds. The student then enjoys the structure of the word he is forming and can try to *sculpt* it in space, so that every word is complete in itself – not a conglomeration of movements, which is the same as spelling.

A thorough knowledge of the laws of sounds, including the birth and development of language, helps to distinguish between *living* words and those that are no longer living; between the sounds that should definitely be visible in eurythmy and those that are better left out or quietly indicated. When Dr. Steiner gave the forms for the “Rockspring Wonder” and we practiced this poem, he told us: “Here you have for once, words which come completely out of eurythmy itself. Now you can really do *all* of the sounds.” And he emphasized another important aspect in relation for the forms on this occasion, saying “The smaller you are able to do the forms, the more beautiful it will be, and the more clearly one will see them.” He wanted to bring us to the experience that the forms should not be ‘stepped’ (gelaufen), but rather, with the movement of the whole Gestalt we should go into it [the form] and identify with it. In order to achieve this, the best thing, according to Dr. Steiner’s indication, is to go into the forms (especially the Apollonian forms) *in standing*, only with the head, shoulders, arms and hands, because that is where the movements begin, so that real eurythmy can arise with agility.

It is a joyful experience for me, when I once practiced with a student intensively in this way, and only then went over into a step, or rather allowed her to go over into movement, how wonderful it is for the onlooker, when really *only* these separate zones — the head zone, the

rhythmical zone: shoulder, arms, hands (so only more or less to the heart), and only then the feet (limb zone) are active, while the whole rest of the human being, the trunk, is ‘taken along’ (according to a statement Rudolf Steiner made at a faculty meeting in Stuttgart), but just because of that, one loses the earthbound quality and achieves a higher mobility.

In addition, it became clear to me that in the eurythmy meditation that Rudolf Steiner gave us, this impression is confirmed. This meditation speaks about: “the word of the feet,” “the singing of the arms,” “the sensing of the head,” only in this trinity. Try once to take this to heart and only apply these three members, when moving the forms as well.

One should also pay attention to the quiet standing. There can be a completely expressionless standing, and there is an extremely artistic standing, full of tension, and therefore active standing. One might possibly call the standing in eurythmy a pause. And since a pause in every art must be filled with tension, so also is the standing in eurythmy. The Gestalt is pulsed through with forces of movement, and at the moment where it goes over again into movement, the forces become outwardly visible again, but they were always present in the quiet Gestalt.

It is not easy to bring students to such an experience, but already much is achieved if they can grasp these things only by *observation*, and thereupon become ever more aware of them. Then the artistic sense can be schooled by this. It will depend more and more on enhancing the artistic sensitivity, the further the teaching advances, to enrich the imaginative activity (Phantasietätigkeit), to broaden the horizon. Because with every eurythmy presentation, there always remains, alongside all the given principles, something which the eurythmist must contribute, where she doesn’t only interpret but is also creative. This realm of our own creative imaginative activity can be awakened and brought to life through eurythmy, but a certain spirit content must be acquired. It must be possible for new artistic impressions to meet with those already in the soul, so that the connecting of ideas can develop, so that one idea can give rise to another, so that a certain richness of soul is available, out of which the artistic spark can be ignited. A certain sense of style can result, when for instance the personalities of the poets or musicians [of the pieces performed] become living conceptions by means of entering into the details of their lives and work. That is absolutely necessary, and it can become a very interesting study, especially in eurythmy, in order to find a style for manifold artistic characters (Wesensarten). When we worked on poetry with Albert Steffen for the first time, and Dr. Steiner saw our final attempts, he silently pointed to the picture on the cover page of “Viaticum” (in the edition of the time). He wanted to tell us to follow the type of movement in which the poet himself had painted the two figures, that we should look for the spirit of the poems and, in order to understand the poems, to bring that to expression. [Albert Steffen was both a poet and a painter.] And a few years earlier while working on a poem by Leinhard about *Francis of Assisi*, Rudolf Steiner gave me the indication do all movements with “bent back joints”. He showed me a few vowels — an U, that did not stream out, did not go out into the widths, but rather that the shoulder, elbow, and wrist were somewhat held back, bent into an angle, as though broken. The result was that one imagined being confronted by someone from the Middle Ages, in the characteristic gesture of pictures of saints.

We are able to branch out far in our search for expressive means for certain types of style. And searching of this kind creates the foundation for the development of an artistic eurythmy. Eurythmy can be fruitful and generate creative ideas for all the other arts; but also the other way around, eurythmy itself will blossom, the broader, more encompassing, and deeper the artistic ground, the cultural consciousness that is given into it as a foundation.