

Eurythmy as Visible Language

This course of studies focuses on how you can develop eurythmy as a personal practice. Through this practice you have had many experiences of how to be fully present in body, soul and spirit.

Eurythmy was born to be an art form that speaks and sings poetry and music through gesture into the etheric world. A person who watches a eurythmy performance should have the feeling that they are looking into another dimension, the world of archetypes and flowing movement that lie behind our physical world like a magical kingdom. Only the eurythmists who have dedicated years of work to this practice are able to penetrate into this world and evoke this experience for the audience.

In the course of a training, eurythmy students work ceaselessly with poetry and music, learning to bring them to life through movement. As they listen to the words of a recited poem, the power of the thoughts, feelings and pictures come alive. Language further reveals its dynamic through its use of sounds, words, cadence, rhythm, flow. We discover that language has its own inherent movement. This is the inspiration for the choreographed forms that the eurythmists move. Following the flow of sounds as well as the meaning of the words, the form will have straight lines and curves, large movements and small. The directionality is experienced in accordance with the meaning and the grammar of the poem. The eurythmists experiences him/herself to be in a majestic etheric field of love, movement and meaning, and creates movements with the whole body that are in perfect coordination with the words of the reciter. Together, they create a story on the stage that reveals the formative forces behind the world of language.

From Sounds to Words

These lessons have introduced you to the deeper meaning of individual sounds. Sounds alone, however, are only the doorway to meaning. When we speak, we make use of virtually limitless combinations of sounds to make words.

In words, vowels and consonants interact in lively combinations. The consonants describe how the shapes and movements of an object are experienced: the vowels express how the soul responds to the object or experience.

As a Eurythmist, I must deepen myself into the inner core of the words. I must play with the words so creatively that their inner nature reveals itself. The tools for this play are the sounds themselves, which, through their capacity to make the imagination and inspiration of the word visible, bring to expression the *gestalt* of a thing or activity and the experience of soul associated with it.

With Eurythmy, I must go beyond the sound-gesture and create *word-gestures*. The word-gesture must transcend mere presentation of the sounds of a word, which would look like gestural spelling. It must make visible the meaning of the entire word through an artistic combination of sound gestures combined with an imagination of picture and an intuition of meaning.

The pronunciation and the meaning of the word will determine how the gesture of each individual sound will be metamorphosed, made larger or smaller, more or less stressed, shaped to interact with other sounds to make one word-picture. In their art, Eurythmists express their individual creativity through their capacity to make the imagination and the inspiration of the word reveal the true nature of the thing.

From Words to Sentences

As sounds are combined into words, words must be brought into a still higher dimension of relationship in sentences. Through an artistic use of syntax, words and phrases are ordered to create well-formed sentences.

I engage an even higher level of artistry when I create eloquent sentence-gestures that make these relationships visible. The tools I use may include specific treatments for the various parts of speech, which allow the formative forces of nouns, the activity of verbs, the relationships established by prepositions, the connectivity given by conjunctions to come alive.

These meditative imaginations provide only the first step of the journey of artistic Eurythmy. Indeed, what happens in Eurythmy when sounds are wed into words and sentences is as infinitely varied as in language.

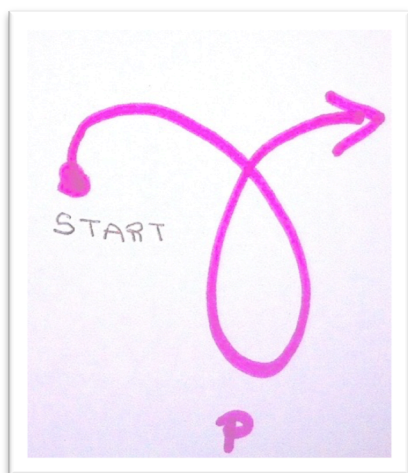
Language is elevated into its highest dimension when it becomes poetic. The poet uses all the elements of language—sounds, words, parts of speech, rhythm, meter and stress—to create a work of art. As a Eurythmist, I take great joy in moving the elements of poetic language, but I experience prosaic or intellectual text to be unpleasant and constricting.

Eurythmy as Art: An Introductory Poem

The next lesson will let you experience a very short, clear and simple form for a poem. Read the poem and bring it to life in yourself, and then practice the choreography that I have drawn for you. As you move through the poem, you will stay continually alive in your consciousness. You will let the sounds of the words become your will, and the thoughts of the poem become your inspiration. You will make the poem come alive. Remember to keep your voice silent, and express the movements of the dominant words with the gestures for the sounds.

A master eurythmist can do subtle gestures for every sound in a poem, and do it artistically and effortlessly. In the beginning, however, choose only the strongest sounds that will enable you to embody the basic meaning of the text.

*Wild are the waves when the wind blows,
But the fishes in the deep
Live in a world of water
Still as sleep.*



You will notice that the poem begins with a string of W's, which are perfect for wind, water and wave forms. Play with the sounds, doing W's forwards and backwards and sideways, dipping into the depths and rising into the heights.

Now focus on the single word "wild." How do these sounds make wildness visible? Begin with a strong, wild W, and then glide from side to side with "ei". Unfurl with an expansive, lively L, and then ground with a strong D.

Of course, when we speak we don't spell the sounds of a word. We also don't spell words in eurythmy. Try now to weave these four sounds together to make the experience of wildness come alive through the sounds. Experiment in a lively way: doing the sounds in different directions until you find a way that is organic.

Try this again with the other major words in this line: waves, wind, blows. (The other smaller words can be done with transitional gestures that are visible but not strongly shaped, just as we don't give them as much consciousness when we speak). Now weave all the words together into a full phrase.

This line of poetry would best be expressed in a wave-like W form. Try weaving the form with a curve as shown here.



Now turn your attention to the fishes. How do these sounds make "fishes" visible? With the F, the fish dart through the water.

With the short "i" sound, one of them flits forward. The SH makes the rippling pools of water forms, and the S magnifies them. Play with the sounds of these lines to make the fishes in the deep.

The words "live in a world of water still as sleep" can be beautifully expressed with the L and V for live, and the rich W movements for world of water. You could use the S and the L as very still movements for the last words, and complete the sentence with "I"(ee) and P as you feel your water into the depths.

These last three lines wind into a point of stillness. They organically wind into a spiral form, like this.

In developing their art, eurythmists may work for hours on simple forms like these, perfecting first the words and then the form, and then working on them together. Dive into this process and discover the process of making a poem come to life through eurythmy!

*Wild are the wave when the wind blow,
But the fishes in the deep
Live in a world of water,
Still as sleep*



