

Eurythmy

*An art of movement
enhancing individual,
social and intellectual abilities*

- *Educational*
- *Artistic*
- *Curative*
- *Social*



Introduction



Eurythmy is a movement art developed at the beginning of the 20th century. It works out of the vital forces in the human being and brings about a harmony of body, soul and mind.

Based on artistic presentation on stage it finds a wide range of application and uses;





as an educational tool in class rooms, in the therapeutic work as well as in the social context and in its practice in the corporate world. Its emphasis on rhythm, structure and flow enhances the inner flexibility, coordination, social- and self-awareness of the participant.

Table of contents

Artistic Eurythmy

Curative Eurythmy

Social Eurythmy-

Eurythmy in the corporate world
and in social contexts

Educational Eurythmy

➤ Aims and methods

- Balance and well-being
- Rhythm
- Sense for art and culture;
integrating body, soul and mind
- Team building, social competence
- Coordination and mid-line crossing
- Concentration and focus
- Listening skills
- Inner flexibility

➤ What does Eurythmy mean for me?

Learner's feedback

About movement and learning – Rae Pica

References

Artistic Eurythmy



The artistic side of the Eurythmy brings the sounds of speech and of music into visibility. It expresses the audible through specific gestures for the vowels and consonants, for tones, intervals and through differentiated ways of movement for the different styles of speech or music. It leaves great freedom of interpretation and expression to the artist, yet always strives to stay true to the text or music worked with. When done in silence, it creates

specific moods or dynamics. Eurythmy, especially in its artistic form, engages very strongly with the space surrounding the person and looks at the constantly changing relationship between someone and his surrounding.

Curative Eurythmy

In 1921 Rudolf Steiner developed the basic principles of curative Eurythmy. This healing aspect of the Eurythmy can be seen as a movement therapy, which



works with the elements of speech; in this case with the qualities of the vowels and consonants. Each vowel or consonant (also called sound) is formed through a specific movement into a gesture expressing the innermost quality and character of the respective sound. The sound-qualities and –characteristics contain essential vital and cosmic forces, which are also inherent in the human organism. Through the patients' carrying out of the particular movements of the sound-gestures his physical, mental and emotional capacities and his different energy fields can be balanced, strengthened and brought back into a healthy flow.

Social Eurythmy – Eurythmy in the corporate world and in social contexts

Here the Eurythmist works with company management, NGOs, people in prisons, staff in factories etc. The aim is to show through various exercises the different facets of social- and life processes. The exercises teach and make visible through movement (instead of discussion) the important qualities of team work, management, all processes of communication, and the responsibility of the group and the individual, for example.



Educational Eurythmy

Aims and methods

Balance and well-being

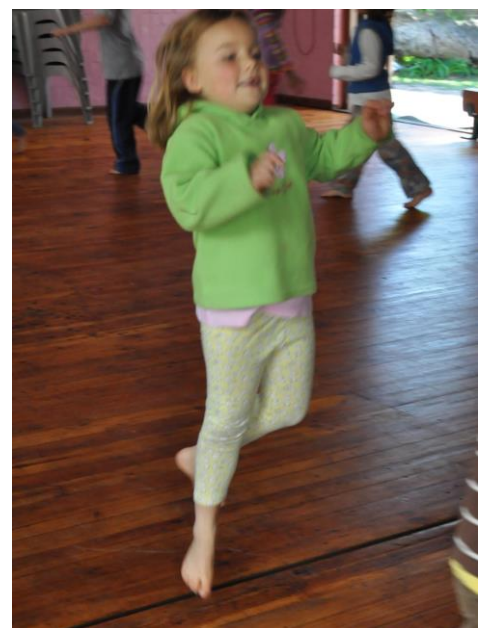


- Finding balance through working with contrasts on many levels, e.g. physical, emotional, spatial
- Alternating between focus and play
- Harmonizing physical, emotional and mental aspects
- Developing a sense for beauty
- Work with processes and images of nature and its elements to balance urban life-style

Rhythm

Nature works in manifold rhythms and in joining into these patterns the life forces in the human being get stimulated. In Eurythmy we do this through working with:

- Repetition
- Contrasts such as:
 - flow – structure
 - small – big
 - fast – slow...
- Daily rhythm
- Various rhythms
- The seasons



Sense for art and culture; integrating body, soul and mind

- Cultural understanding through use of a wide range of poetry, prose and live music
- Working with seasons and cultural festivals
- Working with colour qualities in movement
- Developing imagination
- Developing the aesthetic sense

Team building, social competence

- Responsibility
- Trust
- Group dynamics
- Tactfulness
- Cooperation
- Flexibility
- Adaptability
- Spatial awareness
- Geometry in movement
- Consolidation of self-esteem
- Developing leadership



Coordination and mid-line crossing

- Integration of right and left side of the brain
- Motor skills
- Hand-eye coordination



- Coordination of movement in space:
 individually,
 with the group
- Coordination of movement in time:
 with the group,
 with the music
 or poetry

Concentration and focus

- Developing thinking
- Developing memory
- Developing foresight
- Understanding processes

**“I hear and I forget.
I see and I remember.
I DO and I UNDERSTAND!”
(Confucius)**

Listening skills



- Listening to:
- Instructions
 - Processes
 - Musical nuances
 - Fine tuning
 - To your own body movement
 - To the group
 - Others' body movements

Inner flexibility

- In Eurythmy
it is necessary to switch quickly between different moods and qualities of expression, inwardly (soul-wise) as well as outwardly (physically)
- Develops the ability to adjust to changing demands of life



What does Eurythmy mean for me?

Learner's feedback

"I learn to focus and concentrate and to be able to do something without being distracted by my surrounding." (Duncan)

"Eurythmy helps your imagination to become **more creative**." (Tobias)

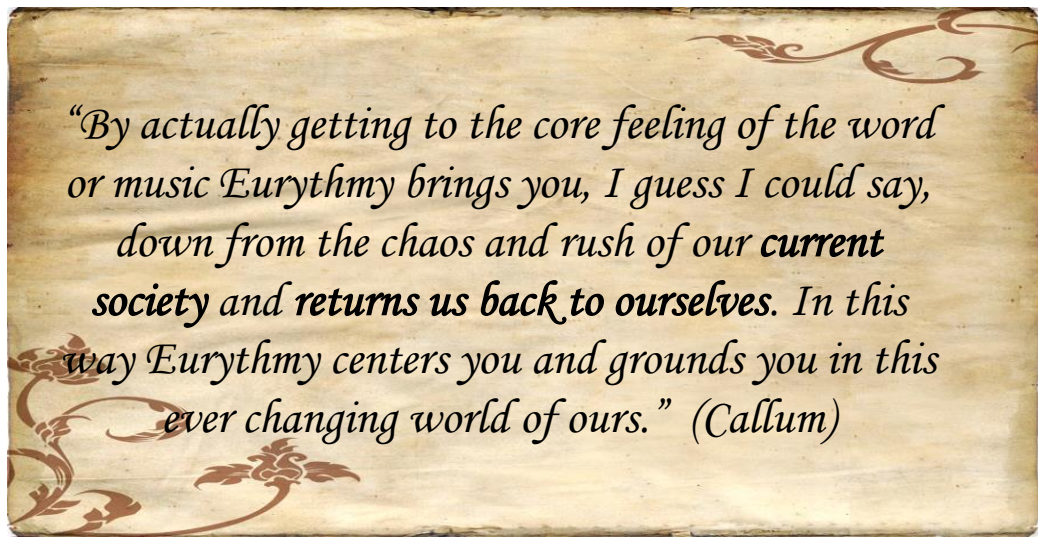
"It was at our performance night... as if energy was poured into our bodies and they were tingling with anticipation- and this was when I realized that we were part of a live and changing art work. As I stood on stage I felt exhilarated by what I was presenting." (Amy)

"Eurythmy is a form of **expression**; it is an art; it allows us to tell the world what we think or feel through **movement**." (Jessica)

"Our world is drifting away from us and with it our sense of **community**. ... there are many solutions- and some are activities such as **Eurythmy**." (Callum)

"Eurythmy is speechless and in this way it allows no barriers with language and culture."
(Jessica)

"It is an art of **graceful** an fluid motion, but the art of Eurythmy also lies in the holding of a **centre**, a sense of self, and an **awareness** of the space the body is occupying on every plane." (Jess)



"By actually getting to the core feeling of the word or music Eurythmy brings you, I guess I could say, down from the chaos and rush of our **current society** and **returns us back to ourselves**. In this way Eurythmy centers you and grounds you in this ever changing world of ours." (Callum)

"We have to learn to **give** and to **take**, to **value** and **respect** one another, to **listen** to each other, to be **aware** of the other."
(Courtenay)

"After a couple of lessons, it helps me **relax my muscles**, while doing all the eurythmical movements, which **stretch** the muscles gently. This also allows your body to be a bit more **flexible**." (Felix)

"I learn to **cooperate** with the others and to **focus** and **concentrate** on my own movement at the same time." (Dean)

"It is the making visible of listening by involving the outward physical expression that happens inwardly. Eurythmy is not only an art form which has real **beauty**, but also allows you to **grow**- it has a **healing force**, brings **order** into a human's life, one may come into the right **relationship** with the space." (Yasmin)

"Eurythmy is like an un-spoken, **universal** language. It harmonizes the simple and the complex, for while it is multi-layered and intricate, it's movements bring us down to the simple essence of sound and meaning." (Jess)

"After a hard day of school work it calms my body and mind down. This causes a good amount of **relaxation**."
(Christopher)

About movement and learning - Rae Pica

(children's physical activity specialist, consultant, author.
Excerpts from: www.movingandlearning.com)

"Active, authentic learning, the process of exploration and discovery [...] will serve [the child] endlessly."

*"Learning by doing creates more neural networks in the brain and throughout the body, making the entire body a tool for learning."
(C. Hannaford)*

"The ability to perform gross motor skills is related directly to physical fitness. And, considering the health hazards for the unfit (obesity, heart disease, low muscle tone and others) this is one area where movement matters even more than language."

"Movement feeds oxygen, water and glucose to the brain, optimizing its performance."



"Recent brain research is confirming that the mind and body are not separate entities. Jensen (2008) confirms that **movement is the child's preferred mode of learning** and that **physical activity activates the brain** much more so than doing seatwork."

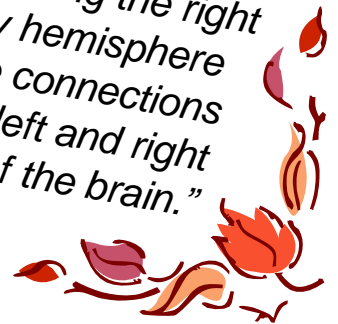


*“When you give children the opportunity to move over, under, around, beside objects and others, they better comprehend prepositions... **When they perform a “slow walk” or skip “lightly”, adjectives and adverbs become much more than abstract concepts. When they’re given the opportunity to physically demonstrate such action words as stomp, pounce, stalk, or slither – or descriptive words like smooth, strong, gentle, or enormous – word comprehension is immediate and long lasting.** This is what promotes emergent literacy and a love of language.”*

Brain development

“A child is born with approximately 100 billion neurons, or nerve cells, in his brain that communicates through tiny connections that form networks. Every experience a child has forms a corresponding network in his brain. **Movement is a central part in acquiring these experiences and stimulating the brain.**”

“Movement is a key factor in providing sensory stimuli for the brain. Through specific movement crossing the right and left body hemisphere we can make connections between the left and right hemisphere of the brain.”



“An active life with physical and mental stimulation is crucial for a child’s brain development.”

References and further resources

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