

Solja Kovero

Eurythmy School in Helsinki, Finland



Beat, rhythm and pitch in the three dimensions of the human being

In this essay I examine in more detail how beat, rhythm, and pitch manifest in different directions from the perspective of the human body. I describe how beat, rhythm, and pitch are shown in different aspects of human nature according to the anthroposophical concept of a human being. I first examine the matter through a three-folded concept of human being, that is, how thought, will and feeling manifest themselves in tone eurythmy. I then examine in more detail how the four-folded concept of the human being (physical body, etheric body, astral body, and ego) manifests itself through the tone eurythmy, and finally I touch on the spiritual aspects of tone eurythmy.

In particular, I used the lectures of Rudolf Steiner Eurythmy as Visible Singing (GA278) and his presentations “The Cosmic Prehistoric Ages of Man - The Threefoldnesses of Space and the Unity of the Time” (GA184 20.9.1918) and “Higher Senses, Inner Force Currents and Creative Laws in the Human Organism” (GA0115 26.10.1909).

Reading the literature sources, I came to the conclusion that both thinking and pitch moves in the vertical axis (down-up). This is how melody equates to thinking. The movement between left and right in space is an area of feeling that, in the tone eurythmy, corresponds to the expression of the harmony, the orientation of cadences to the right and left. The forward and backward movement is an area of a will and in the expression of rhythm so that short tones are made in front and forward and long tones are decelerating and orienting backwards.

The division becomes more subtle through a four-folded concept. The physical human being denotes the beat, the etheric body expresses rhythm and astral body is with the pitch.

From up to down the human self descends and from bottom up the astrality rises: the descending melody brings the pathos and one in their own self and the ascending melody elevates the soul. From right to left is the direction of the etheric body and from left to right is the direction of the physical body. The beat is expressed in eurythmy by shifting weight between the right and left leg and this is understood as the shifting between the etheric body and the physical body. In the astral area, the direction of the sensory soul is from back to front and the direction of the sensory body from front to back - you can conceptualize them as currents. Rhythmicity manifests itself as forward and backward movements so that it is accompanied by a feeling: the sensory soul fills short tones in the front and the sensory body empties the long tones.

In the presentation I demonstrated with a performing group the beat, rhythm and pitch in tone eurythmy by using the excerpt of J.S. Bach’s Air on the G String (BWV 1068 2. Staz).