# EURYTHMY ROOM DESIGN
# - PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA -

*-Reg Down -*

Waldorf schools are continuing to experience growth and development as awareness of the need for meaningful forms of education increases. Associated with this growth is a rising demand for eurythmists, as well as a need to construct or remodel spaces suitable for a healthy and thriving eurythmy program. How this space is designed can have a huge impact on the children, the teaching, and the health and well-being of the teacher.

This article is addressed primarily to the architect-builder, constituting principles and parameters to be guided by when designing a room for eurythmy. In addition, the reasons underlying these guidelines from a practical, pedagogical and anthroposophic point of view are outlined, as the presumption is made that the designer/builder has an interest in the professional needs and philosophic background of an anthroposophic or Waldorf client.

The architectural style of the building has been deliberately left out of the discussion as this is the province of the architect. Nevertheless, a building's style is, or should be, consonant with its purpose. The architect is encouraged to delve into Rudolf Steiner's contribution to architecture as his architectural insights and the art of eurythmy are sourced from the same spring, and then, out of the architects own artistic nature, develop a style in harmony with the prevailing environment, community and culture. A brief bibliography is included at the end of the article.

## THE SPACE

The overall layout of the eurythmy space should have the following features:

1) A balanced left / right symmetry, with an easily identifiable centerline.

2) One end of the room should clearly be the front, and the other clearly the back.

3) A vaulted ceiling.

4) Reflect the existence of a circle of people within the space.

The first three principles are derived from our experience of ourselves as a unified, three-fold being consisting of body, soul, and spirit. This may sound philosophically distant, but is in fact quite straightforward.

## 'Body'

Our body has two, symmetrically mirrored halves which we are continually bringing into balance around our centerline. This principle should reflect itself in the room as a whole, and is especially important as regards the floor plan. It might be tempting to think that because eurythmy is an art of movement, the eurythmy room should also 'move' as regards its layout. This is not true. Just as the painter requires a blank canvas, or the musician silence, the eurythmist requires a room which is 'at rest'; a space which supports the free unfolding of eurythmy without interference.

A significant number of choreographic forms used in eurythmy have a left/right symmetry or an implied centerline, and unequal spaces on the left and right calls for constant adjustment to

compensate - something that is especially difficult for children. Ideally, we should feel as naturally balanced in the room as we do in our bodies. The wall details, (windows etc.), on either side, however, do not need to be strictly mirrored - though they should be aesthetically balanced, if possible.

## 'Soul'

What I have designated as 'Soul' - in connection with the front and back of the room - is also a common everyday experience. While our body has two symmetrical halves, it is also organized to accommodate the human soul, and we can read from our front and back the traits our soul carries. Physiologically we are open to the front and closed to the back. Our front, and especially our face, is highly differentiated, while our back has simpler forms. Rather than being symmetrically mirrored halves, our front and back are mirrored opposites.

Our senses are directed to the outer world from our front, while what lies behind is invisible to the senses for the most part. As a result our soul is conscious of the world through our front, and unconscious to the world via our back. The particular feelings we are experiencing in our ever-changing and mercurial soul life show themselves on our front; our back does not easily show particular feelings from moment to moment, but does reveal relatively unchanging, (and unconscious), deep-seated character and constitutional traits.

While what lies in front of us holds our attention in everyday life, what lies behind is of great importance in eurythmy, and much of the eurythmist's training is directed towards opening up to the 'back space'. For us, 'back space' forms a polarity with front space'. 'Front space' is where the objective material world lies, while 'back space' is where the objective spiritual world is found. Between lies the individual human being who mediates this polarity via the soul. Just as we have, and experience, a front and back, so too should the eurythmy room leave no doubt which is the front and which is the back. This need not be complex, merely clear.

Far from being abstract conventions, 'front space' and 'back space' are highly differentiated and richly colored in eurythmy. Both contain a host of artistic qualities and, in one way or other, are intensely cultivated. In pedagogical eurythmy, especially from grade four onwards, many of the choreographic forms call on the students to face the front. This is not only a preparation for stage work where the students face the audience, but to develop and maintain a fine sense for space.

Cultivating a fine sense for space might seem, at first glance, to be of dubious merit. If we consider, however, that our whole existence is encompassed by only two elements, time and space, then perhaps we can get a better feeling for the importance of space in education. We cultivate music and the spoken arts, with their strong connection to time and timing, but a feeling for cultivating a delicate sense of space seems to have been lost. Gymnastics does this to a certain degree, but is more concerned with the physical body than with space, whereas eurythmy, even though it is a performing art of movement, keeps alive a qualitative experience of space.[1] We might wonder how different architecture would become if a sense for space were a common curricular item in education. Bearing in mind that Waldorf education seeks to educate the whole human being, the importance of eurythmy and the quality of the architectural space in which eurythmy is taught is vital.

[1] *Bothmer gymnastics and Spatial Dynamics differ in this respect and also seek to develop a meaningful relationship to space.*

## 'Spirit'

What I have designated as 'spirit' relates to our uprightness. We experience the flat earth beneath our feet, and above our heads lies the vault of the heavens. Even the shape of our head and feet reflects these forms. Likewise, the eurythmy room should have a flat floor and a vaulted ceiling. As an individual spirit (or ego) we incarnate from the upper world to the earth. When we faint, sleep or die we lose our uprightness, as we have, temporarily or otherwise, severed the connection with our earthly body and reentered the spiritual world. While our body, as 'body', has mirrored halves, and our body, as possessor of 'soul', has mirrored opposites, our body, as bearer of 'spirit', has metamorphologically mirrored forms with respect to head and limbs.[2]

To be consistent with the polarities evident in left/right and front/back, the actual polarity on the vertical axis is below the earth (hell or nether world), and above the earth (heaven or upper world). We live at the balancing point between these two; grounded, yet capable of spiritual freedom.

Even the simplest of raised ceiling adds tremendously to how one feels within a room, for it corresponds to the inner reality indicated above. A vaulted ceiling creates a sense of peaceful space; we breath easily, and experience being comfortably held. Eurythmically, a vaulted ceiling receives and lightens our gestures, whereas, by comparison, a flat ceiling is sterile and impenetrable.

The qualities of the space below us and the space above us are also diversely hued and multifaceted, and play an integral part in the eurythmy curriculum. The experience of standing on the earth with the heavens above is strengthened via poetry and gesture from kindergarten through grade twelve. Developmentally, children grow from the head downwards[3] and, aside from any practical or aesthetic considerations, I would maintain that children experience the vaulted form of the ceiling - or lack thereof - far more intensely than adults. Children are freshly incarnated from the arched space of heaven and, in an inner sense, a raised ceiling confirms who they are and where they have come from. For them, especially, a flat ceiling in a eurythmy room is an architectural falsehood, as it fails to comply with the human form and experience.

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The six qualities of left/right, front/back, above/below are how we as a body, soul and spirit experience ourselves in space. To be human means living at the fulcrum of all three polarities. These common, though often unheeded, experiences are intensely cultivated and kept alive in eurythmy, and, as I have hopefully been able to show in this brief overview, have great depth and significance.

## THE CIRCLE

[2] *L.F.C. Mees*, Secrets of the Skeleton, *Anthroposophic Press*, *Spring Valley, N.Y., 1984 explores metamorphosis within the human being. Highly recommended.*

[3] *Following human physiological development from conception through maturity amply demonstrates this statement see Bernard Lievegoed,* Phases of Childhood, *Floris Books / Anthroposophical Press, and Armin Husemann,* Harmony of the Human Body, *Floris Books, 1994.*

In addition to the above guidelines we need to make provision for the students to form an adequate circle, *and*, ideally, the circle should be indicated in the shape and layout of the building.

Forming a circle is one of the backbones of eurythmy, and a room whose dimensions adequately allow for this is essential. An 'adequate' circle is, of course, a variable dimension depending on the age and number of students. As guideline dimensions are given later; it suffices for the moment to say that each child should be able to stand and move their arms without hitting their neighbors on either side. Similarly, they need to move rapidly in a circle; freely and without being cramped.

On a deeper level, the architecture of the eurythmy room will reflect the existence of the circle within. The qualities of what we might call 'circle space' is a counterpart to the space described earlier. 'Circle space' is above all feminine; it is receptive, embracing, and inclusive. When we stand in a circle we are in the midst of a mutually supportive group sharing a common center. It is a *social* space where 'we' and 'us' are uppermost. Eurythmy actively cultivates the social sense within children, and contains a host of pedagogical and artistic exercises to support this - often based on circle-oriented choreography. While circle space is utilized most intensely during the first years of school it continues to play a major role right through grade twelve.

The three-dimensional space with six primary qualities described earlier is, on the other hand, a masculine space. Here each individual can stand alone and establish his own relationship to the world. It is, in brief, an 'I' space. Ideally, both 'We' space and 'I' space are harmoniously married in the design of an all-purpose eurythmy room, as both have their rightful place in the world.

A practical example of how these two qualitative spaces relate to human life is in the 'nine year change'. It occurs, as the name implies, in and around the ninth year of life. Until the ninth year the child lives within the soul in such a way that there is no clear distinction between him or herself, their family, or the world. In other words, they live in the all-inclusive 'circle space'. During the ninth year a revolution occurs - though, because it happens in the soul, it often passes unobserved. An inner separation takes place, and the child now looks upon the world as a thing apart. This is the age when children ask their parents if they are adopted, as they no longer assume the oneness of the world but experience themselves as being separate.

This transition is beautifully clear in the eurythmy curriculum in that the children move from one type of space to the other. From kindergarten until grade three all eurythmy essentially exists in 'circle space', but in the fourth grade the children begin to face front when moving their choreography. This draws on quite different forces within the child; reflecting and supporting the inner transition they are undergoing. Each child has to take what used to be the commonly shared center of 'circle space' and *places it within themselves.* They turn, quite literally, away from this shared center and establish their own individual center. It is remarkable how avidly the children take up this new activity of always facing front, as it is a true reflection of the process they themselves are undergoing, and a well designed room assists tremendously in this transition.

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As we might imagine, the ideal eurythmy room would alter its shape from lesson to lesson according to the age group being taught within it. A kindergarten room would be in the round. It would be protective and embracing, and certainly not strike the casual observer as a teaching space. Grades one, two, and three would be similar, only larger, more open, and it would be a teaching space with blackboards, benches, and so forth. Grades four through seven or eight would be larger again, integrating both 'We' space and 'I' space. Grades nine through twelve would add dramatic and powerful architectural elements to the room, setting the mood for the study of

modern poetry and music, as well as the planet and zodiac gestures. Most schools, however, encompass many age groups, or lack the funds for multiple eurythmy rooms. Thus the best choice is a room which combines both types of space in an aesthetic and functional way.

## ATMOSPHERE

A key word for eurythmists in their lessons is 'atmosphere'. Although a nebulous term, atmosphere is instantly recognizable when present in the eurythmy lessons, and a teacher's ability to create the right mood can be greatly enhanced through the architecture of the eurythmy room. Atmosphere renders the students susceptible to eurythmy - something not always easily achieved in our fast-paced, technological culture. For this reason, combining a space for both eurythmy and sports/gymnastics is never successful for eurythmy. While both have to do with the body and with movement, one is an art and the other primarily a sport. Above all, eurythmy is an art of the *soul,* and the eurythmy room must reflect and provide a space for the soul's expression.

Overall, the eurythmy room should be tasteful, inviting, and comfortable. Uplifting, as opposed to heavy; soft, rather than hard-edged; spacious, without being cavernous; embracing, but not constraining; allowing us to move freely and without constraint, yet inviting us to gaze inwards to find the source of our movement.

An essential factor in achieving the right atmosphere is illumination. As every architect knows, the shape, size, and placement of windows and light sources can greatly enhance a space. A room resonates visually when it has beautiful windows and a purposeful relationship to light. As we have seen, the eurythmy room is an architectural externalization or e*x-press-ion* of the human being. In this instance, windows correspond to our eyes.

Windows and eyes are mediators between inside and outside. Both allow light to stream in and sight to gaze out. Physiologically the eyes hold a mid-position on the face; the expressive, feeling element between the actively doing jaw (willing) and the immobile cranium (thinking). Likewise, walls - and the windows therein - mediate between the floor on which we actively move and the enclosing ceiling. The window, as a soul or feeling element within architecture, comes to exquisite expression in the stained-glass windows of the Gothic cathedral, or those of the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland.[4]

While stained-glass windows are certainly not necessary for eurythmy rooms, colored light can be readily achieved - if the windows receive enough light - by installing two or three curtain tracks, each carrying a different colored, extremely transparent curtain. Colored light affects children deeply, and by variously drawing the curtains one can control the color-mood within the room according to the seasons, the age of the children, or the constitution of the class.

Another factor as regards atmosphere is warmth. Not only physical warmth - something that is vital for eurythmy - but also warmth through the choice of forms and finishing materials. Eurythmy rooms, being large and essentially empty, can seem hard-edged and even impersonal, and care must be taken to counteract this. Using wood for the cupboards, benches, wainscoting, and/or the ceiling are perhaps the most obvious remedies. In addition to being natural, warm, and pleasing to the eye, wood also assists in moderating the quality of the sound within the room.

Other factors which play a role in creating a space with atmosphere include colors, textures, type of lighting and lighting fixtures, trim materials, plants, and so forth. Many of these will be dealt with in more detail later.

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[4] *Georg Hartmann*, The Goetheanum Glass-windows, *Philosophish-Anthroposophischer Verlag am Goetheanum. A beautiful book.*

# THE TEACHING SPACE

Allow sufficient space for the teacher to stand, move and observe the class when the students are moving by themselves. This area is in the front of the room where the blackboard and piano are placed. Generally 8' (x width of room) of free space is sufficient. Important points to note are that the teacher should be able to observe all the children easily at a glance - seated or otherwise - as well as ensuring good eye contact and access to the pianist.

# LENGTH AND BREADTH

The eurythmy room should be longer than broad as, inwardly, we experience front/back as having greater length than left/right. Left/right tends to be body-bound, whereas 'front' extends as far as our physical eyesight, and 'back' extends as far as our inner eyesight. In addition, eurythmists first orient themselves to the front/back axis, and from there develop their choreography, movements and gestures. The teaching space with piano, blackboard, and so forth are at the front of the room in any case, making for a space which is longer than broad. Furthermore, the eurythmy room often acts as an auditorium, and the greater length allows audience and players to face each other.

# SQUARE FOOTAGE

Square footage is a variable which depends on the age and number of students within the classes. My personal experience is that, in the USA and Canada at least, most rooms are too small given the size of the classes and, just as importantly, too small for the demands of the eurythmy curriculum - especially from grade five or six onwards.

Other factors regarding choice of room size play into the equation. For instance, a school might build a small-sized room for economic reasons, but soon find that many classes need to be divided in order to accommodate them in the room. Thus, instead of a class requiring one teaching-hour for one eurythmy period, the class now needs *four* teaching-hours to cover four periods - two for eurythmy and two for the other half of the class doing something else. It does not take long for the savings accrued when building a smaller eurythmy room to be eaten up in on-going extra teaching expenses.

Overall, a small eurythmy room is about 1000 sq. feet, a medium sized one about 1200 - 1300 sq. feet, and a large one about 1600 sq. feet plus.

Note that seating benches occupy space and reduce usable dimensions. This needs to be taken into account when determining the *usable* space available for movement.

# THE FLOOR

**The type of flooring is vital. The teacher *will* be physically damaged by working on an improper floor.** Floors are such an important factor that Eurythmy Associations have taken up the issue on behalf of all eurythmists, as teachers can lose their ability to practice their profession due to damage to the spine, hips, legs or feet. In Holland, for instance, it is illegal for any school to provide any sort of indoor movement activity on anything other than a sprung floor. Eurythmy requires a floor suitable for moving upon over extended periods; this cost must be factored into the equation when deciding whether a school wishes to establish a eurythmy program.

It cannot be overstated how important the type of floor is, for the health of the eurythmy teacher and the children can be seriously affected by it. The only true solution is a sprung floor. Floors laid directly on concrete are particularly injurious - even when used briefly - and should be replaced.

Since the first edition of this paper it has come to my attention that some companies are calling certain floors a 'sprung' floor. I presume this is because it adds cache to the image of their product. What this means in practice is that the floor covering is not laid directly on concrete or an immobile surface but has a layer (for instance) of half inch foam underneath. *This is not the type of sprung floor needed for movement*. A sprung floor needed for movement is *literally* sprung (using various devices to achieve the desired effect) and moves so much that a _" gap is left where the floor meets the wall to allow air to enter and exit. My research on the internet – backed up with an actual installation at the Baltimore Waldorf School which has proved highly successful – points to a company called Connor Sports Flooring Corp. (Corporate Office: 251 Industrial Park Road, Amasa, MT 49903. Fax: 906-822-7800, 1-800-833-7144. Their e-mail address is: WWW.Connorfloor.com. See their 'Neoshok' system.) They are sports facilities experts with installations in numerous locations. They have a range of flooring products. The one used in Baltimore uses a two-stage neoprene shock pad attached to plywood; then another layer of plywood; then a hardwood maple floor. The floor has the above mentioned air space and uses a vented rugger molding. (Details on the internet.) As a plus, the company is certified as part of Smart Wood, a program of the Rain Forest Alliance, an international non-profit conservation organization.

The upper floor surface can be hardwood or carpet. Hardwood is beautiful, easy to move on and convenient to clean, but adds to sound reverberating around the room. Carpet is cheaper, but needs replacing every five to seven years, as a tired carpet, possibly with stains, candle wax or chewing gum added to the mix, makes a room look unattractive and ugly. On the other hand, carpet absorbs sound, which helps with the acoustics, is softer to fall on, and allows eurythmy rods to fall without an ear shattering clatter – all distinct advantages. (Eurythmy teachers regularly use 'eurythmy rods' in their lessons. The are made of half inch copper piping, circa 30" long with protective tips at the ends. They make a fierce din when dropped on a hard floor.) Carpet color should harmonize with the room. Glue-down, multicolor (meaning a harmonious mix of fiber hues),commercial 'level-loop' is a good option. Color tone should not be too dark or too light; also avoid solid colors, prints, patterns or textures.
Floors must always be warm to the touch - even in winter - therefore apply adequate sub-floor insulation or in-floor heating.

## TOXIC MATERIALS

Eurythmy is physically active. As a consequence, whatever is in the air is breathed in deeply by the children and the teacher. Toxic building and finishing materials will damage the health of both children and teachers and are unacceptable.

## SOUND PROOFING AND ACOUSTICS

Sound absorption ***must*** be considered as part of the design. Eurythmy rooms, being large and empty, can echo terribly! Unfortunately this is one area that is consistently ignored by designers – even good one – and yet it is vital. Eurythmy lessons are noisy at times, especially with large numbers of children, and even more so during rod exercises. Furthermore, the floor can act as a

drum skin, even if carpeted, when many people are moving on it. For the teacher especially, the result of an improperly considered acoustical environment leads to auditory overload, difficulty in hearing and being heard by the students, headaches, and high stress levels. In order for sound absorbing panels - or whatever other method is used - not to detract from the beauty of the room, or look like an oversight trying to be corrected after the fact, *their design should be part of the overall concept of the room.* Having retrofit unsightly panels can so easily be avoided and is quite unnecessary as this is not a high cost item. Cheap sound board or fiberboard covered with fabric can do the trick.

Also ensure adequate noise protection from play areas and neighboring rooms. Do not place noise-making areas or classrooms - woodworking or metal work, for instance, - adjacent to the eurythmy room, as the music and the voice of the teacher need to be easily heard within both the 'piano' *and* 'forte' range.

## LIGHTING

While fluorescent lighting is the norm for institutions and large spaces, it is unsuitable for eurythmy rooms. Contractors, designers, and architects have often quoted from research regarding the more 'natural' light of modern, broad spectrum fluorescent tubes in combination with electronic ballast's which do not flicker or hum, etc. For eurythmists, although the advice is well meant, it misses the point. For us, fluorescent lighting floods a space with flat light and destroys all atmosphere. They are *awful* to work and teach under. In addition, children are negatively affected by this type of lighting. Ideally, the eurythmy room has no need for artificial lighting during the day. Nevertheless, keeping it off is sometimes impossible due to darkness in the dead of winter, or for children with weak eyes needing to see the blackboard.

The best solution is incandescent fixtures on the walls and/or ceiling, strategically combined with track lighting. Specify multiple switches to allow the teacher to control the lighting level. Direct one set of lighting with separate switch towards the blackboard. Light covers and shades should be shatterproof as they may be hit by eurythmy rods. Locate switches where the children cannot easily play with them.

## WINDOWS

As stated, windows are the eyes of a room, holding a mid-position between floor and ceiling, and mediating between inside and outside. A high-windowed room which does not allow us to see out is visually constraining, and leaves us with the feeling of being partially underground. The proportions of the floor, walls, ceiling and windows should allow us to feel as if we are standing *on* the earth, not *below* the earth. Similarly, windows should not be placed so low that one feels in danger of falling through. Every site will have its own considerations, but as with the elements already covered, seek the artistic balance between polarities when designing the windows. Eyes are also beautiful and expressive; allow this to play into the widow design.

Windows which are broader than tall can give the room an impression of weightiness, as does the high-windowed room described above. Overall, the eurythmy room should feel light and uplifting. Therefore, install taller than broad windows, or, in the case of large, custom-designed windows, add to their verticality by giving them strong mullions. Golden mean proportions lend added harmony.

Windows that gaze out onto nature are a wonderful gift. In the event of a lack of natural views, a strategically placed mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs are effective. Sill height should be such that, when the children are seated, they cannot lean against the glass. Lightweight,

sheer curtains are effective and attractive. They also allow the eurythmist to control the degree of inwardness of the room without darkening it too much.
As fresh air is often needed, the windows should open - though never inwards where children might injure themselves. Specify safety glass (automobile type) if there is any danger of a child tripping and falling against a window. Do not position windows where people can gaze in or press their faces against the window as this is very distracting to both the teacher and the lesson in progress.

## THE CEILING

While ceiling heights are determined by the concordant proportions of the room, note that a 6' student with raised hand reaches circa 8'; add a eurythmy rod (30") to the upraised hand and they easily reach 10'; have the student toss the rod in the air and it reaches 11' or 12'. Therefore, allow a minimum of 8' at the sides to minimum 14' at center.
On a retro-fit room, if the ceiling is sufficiently high, a vaulted ceiling can be effected by angling part of the ceiling down to the wall.

## HEATING AND AIR EXCHANGE

The room should be comfortable without being over hot or cool. The floor must be warm as the eurythmist is attempting to permeate the children with eurythmy right into their feet - something almost impossible to do when the children's feet are cold.
While all heating methods have pros and cons, the goal is a consistent, even temperature the teacher can control. This ideal must be considered in conjunction with adequate air exchange. It is important that the teacher be able to control their room temperature *from within their room* as some lessons are very vigorous and thus need a cool temperature. The following lesson might not entail any vigorous movement and thus need a warmer temperature.
While forced air provides a positive air exchange it has serious drawbacks: it dries the air, making it unpleasant and difficult to breathe when moving vigorously; it can be hard on the throat and larynx - a difficulty when moving and speaking all the time. In addition, the temperature can fluctuate greatly and furnace fans may be noisy, especially if located adjacent to the eurythmy space.
In addition, although it may sound strange to a reader unfamiliar with eurythmy, forced air can present a difficulty for eurythmists in as much as they work with the air around them. 'Working with the air' is not quantifiable in physical terms, but is a real experience for the eurythmist. To explain this point in a nutshell: eurythmy can be characterized as 'visible speech', and just as we shape the air from our lungs when it moves through our speech organs, so too does the eurythmist form gestures within and through the air. Mechanically forcing heated air into the room destroys this delicate activity.
If forced air is unavoidable, some of its unsuitability can be ameliorated through attaching a humidifier, and by allowing the teacher to govern when it comes on by placing a control thermostat within the room.
Hot water radiators and electric baseboards have a more consistent heat than forced air, though none assist air exchange. Electric baseboard allows the teacher the greatest degree of temperature control if each baseboard has a built-in thermostat. Electric baseboards need to be inset into the wall - or otherwise protected - as they quickly get damaged from being backed into and stepped on.

Air exchange is necessary as the air quickly becomes stale during the lessons (another good reason for high ceilings). In addition, over the long run, a room with insufficient air exchange will begin to smell. Solutions to this problem are entirely site specific. If placing windows for a cross draft, or installing vent chimneys which draw the air out of the room naturally is not possible, then a quiet, variable speed, mechanical exhaust the teacher can control is possibly the best solution.

## THE ENTRANCE

If the eurythmy building is free-standing, allow for a covered waiting area for classes. Be careful where this is placed for noise and supervision considerations.
In colder climates, a spacious, warm and easily cleaned foyer is necessary. Allow sufficient space for two classes to be present - one leaving and one entering. It is important that the children enter the classroom in a calm state, therefore give careful thought to this area. Provide adequate sound-proofing between the foyer and the eurythmy room, especially if a number of classrooms share the same entrance. Allow for seating which makes for a calmer shoe changing procedure, (outdoor shoes are generally not allowed into a eurythmy room).

## THE PIANO

As the pianist and teacher often need to have quick words together, place the piano in the teaching area at the front of the room.
A badly-placed piano can do great damage to a student who runs or trips into it, therefore allow sufficient room in the teaching space, or create a separate alcove, for the piano to be out of the way.
The pianist needs a direct view of the teacher and the class without having to constantly twist around; having to do this leads to neck and shoulder problems and poor communication between teacher and pianist. Strategic location, combined with a low piano, such as a studio or baby grand, takes care of this problem.
Allow for a bookshelf in the vicinity of the piano; also ensure sufficient natural light during the day for the pianist to read by. Place an outlet close to the piano for a lamp and for the piano humidifier.

## WALL COLOR AND DECORATION

Walls are often a lilac color following Rudolf Steiner's indications. If lazured with layers of color, avoid too great an intensity. Rudolf Steiner's indication for pictures in eurythmy rooms: "Soul dynamic of the human being".

## SEATING

Children should not sit on the floor as they get restless, or lie down and cease paying attention. Individual chairs are too noisy and mobile. Squeak-free, sturdy (and attractive) benches are best. Make them difficult to tip backwards or forwards, and ensure sufficient lateral bracing.

## SHOE CUPBOARDS

Shoe cupboards assist the teacher in organizing and keeping track of eurythmy shoes, as well as allowing each child easy access to their particular pair - an important point when there are scores of children and twice as many feet! A pigeon hole design, each hole being circa 4" wide x 5" high x 12" deep is effective. Allow for each cubby to have a name or two attached beneath. Lockable doors - beautifully made - are preferable for security and aesthetics sake.
If the room is a plain rectangle, the cupboards can be built into the corners at 45 degrees. This creates a more interesting space, as well as providing shelving space for plants, etc. on top.

## STORAGE

Even a modest eurythmy program needs storage for costumes, props, and so forth. Security against humans and animals, as well as climate control, are important as eurythmy costumes are delicate and expensive. In a full program situation, allow sufficient room for two people to iron a bunch of costumes. This room is best attached to the eurythmy room for convenience, and because it can double as a changing room/backstage area for performances. Keep the eurythmy storage separate from the drama storage - by tradition an organizational disaster area !

## THE STAGE

Because of its size and artistic ambiance, the eurythmy room often hosts eurythmy, drama, music, and puppetry performances. Provisions should be made during construction to accommodate a simple stage rather than trying to deal with it after the fact. The main points are: if there is a storage area, ensure that it can double as a backstage changing room behind the curtains; determine where the temporary curtains will hang from the ceiling, (including various options), and ensure wood backing to accommodate eye hooks; provide ceiling outlets and dimmer switches, as well as wood backing in the appropriate areas to allow a simple, removable, lighting rack to be hung. Locate outlets left and right of the stage area for side- and footlights. Ensure there are multiple electrical circuits.

## PUPPET STAGE

Eurythmy rooms also make wonderful puppetry rooms. This activity can be easily integrated with the stage / storage area if it is strategically located. A permanent stage opening can be provided in the storage area wall for glove, marionette, rod and shadow puppets, and/or a sufficiently large storage space to accommodate storage of portable marionette stages and theaters.

## MACHINES

Machines that need to function during eurythmy lessons are unacceptable. Furnace blowers, exhausts, intakes, heating fans, cooling fans, air conditioning, and so forth; all provide an inappropriate background for classical music and artistically spoken speech.

## TRIM

Custom designed trim heightens the beauty of the room. Woodworking parents are generally happy to take this project on.

## PLANTS

Indoor plants bring nature into the room and soften its atmosphere. Allow wide window sills or protected alcoves to accommodate them.

## A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY


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*Reg Down is author of **Leaving Room for the Angels** - a book on eurythmy and artistically inspired Waldorf pedagogy, published by ASWNA Press. He had the privilege of studying under Keith Critchlow at the Architecture Association, London, England for two years in his late teens. He has taught eurythmy in Waldorf Schools in Australia, Canada and the United States.*