

The Angle Gestures: a confirmation of Eurythmy as Visible Singing

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The impulse to write this article came from the interesting discussion in the recent *Newsletters* on the angle-gestures.¹ In the following contribution, I wish to expand on some aspects in the hope of contributing to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the angle-gestures.

Two types of angle-gestures

There are two types of angle-gestures. Firstly, the 30° angle-gestures for the interval degrees of the scale and secondly the angles which take into account the semitones and tones of a scale. I have always considered the former to be archetypal, and will therefore call them the archetypal gestures. As such they stand behind the latter gestures, which I consider to be closer to the physical natures of the *tones* they represent. The latter are therefore also closer—but not identical²—to the tones of equal temperament.³

The archetypal gestures

The archetypal gestures are felt in the same way as the positions for the meditation ‘I think speech’, *i.e.*, as standing behind you. When forming the gestures, I slip or step into the form felt behind in advance. I could also say that I clothe myself with the form by stepping into it.

The archetypal gestures become less abstract when one differentiates in feeling between them. This can be done in the following way, similarly to how Alan Stott suggests: You can imagine yourself standing in a circle encompassing the

sideways plane, in which the archetypal gestures lie, and making a differentiation between the colour felt in the space between the arms—e.g., yellow—and the colour felt in the periphery—e.g., blue. With the prime the yellow between the arms is smallest and the blue in the periphery the largest. For the second degree of the scale, the yellow between the arms grows and the blue in the periphery between the arms and legs diminishes correspondingly. It is important nowadays to emphasise that the arms are then *moved* and carried by the colour. The (in this case) yellow colour grows and moves the arms with it. With the fifth the colours invert and the yellow is felt between the arms and legs, while the blue is felt between the legs and above the arms. Through the following degrees of the scale the yellow grows until it is in the whole periphery with the octave.

An interesting variation, quite different in feeling, is to feel the gestalt in the same colour as the space between the arms. In the first tetrachord (prime to the fourth) the gestalt is yellow or light and the periphery is dark. In the second tetrachord (fifth to the octave) the gestalt is blue, or dark, and is carried from outside by the light.⁴

The archetypal gestures together with the tone gestures

When I proceed from the degrees of the scale and take the tones of a key into account, this archetypal scale remains present behind me. When forming the G in G major for example, I do the G-angle and behind me the archetypal prime stands: I step into the archetypal gesture of the prime with the gesture of the G and clothe the G with it. It is essential that I feel it this way around. If I understand him correctly, Alan Stott gets it the wrong way around and it is no wonder that Reinhard Wedemeier has problems trying to imagine or do it as Alan suggests "...with the gesture 'G' in G major, not only prime but also the archetypal 5th degree (in C major) is to be experienced" (quoted from Wedemeier's article). It is the prime that has to be felt as the archetype and not the fifth.⁵ The gesture for the tone is not the archetype. The tone-gesture is a step closer to the physical; therefore the angles for the tones can also be changed to give expression to the tone/semitone structure of a scale.

Pitch as a level of incarnation

The archetypal angles are independent of pitch. Their quality can best be described as a level of incarnation, *i.e.*, more in the gestalt (first tetrachord) or more in the periphery (second tetrachord). But when a tone is done together with an archetype, something similar to a pitch feeling arises. For example: with G in G major the gestalt takes on the level of incarnation as for the archetypal prime, or the A in D major is coloured by the level of incarnation of the archetypal fifth. The result is a corresponding change to the space around the eurythmist which can be experienced and described easily and exactly by eurythmist and onlooker alike. A good exercise is to practice doing the tone A, for example, with the feeling of prime, second, third...octave. The angle remains the same, the level of incarnation changes.

Sharps and flats

In his article "The three levels of being of musical sound (Part 1)",⁶ Heiner Ruland points out that if we add extra tones into the seven-tone diatonic scale, they are experienced as a

chromatic 'colouring' of the tones already present. This is reflected in Rudolf Steiner's indication for doing the sharps and flats: a brightening into a right angle for the sharps and a darkening into a right angle for the flats. The angle remains the same. But what *is* the relationship between, say, C and C#? This can be found by considering the following: The difference between c and C is an octave of seconds (c, d, e, f, g, a, b, C). The difference between C and C# is an 'octave' of fifths (C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, C#)! Through this a justification is given for calling C and C# the same tone! C, an octave of fifths higher is filled with light and becomes C#. Alternately the same applies, for instance, to C and Cb, but becoming darker (C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb)! This thought is a beautiful expansion of Goethe's Theory of Music where he says: the tonal monad contracts and expands.

How can the angles be experienced as a reality?

The difficulty in finding a direct experience in feeling between the relationship of the angle-gestures to the sounding tones and degrees of the scale has often been stated. I am therefore moved to relate the following two experiences in the hope that they will be of help.

Firstly, I often experience when improvising that the arms are moved by the music into an angle-gesture, which, upon looking into the score, I find is correct. I have learned that I can determine the key of a piece through trusting this. A certain feeling in the tone makes the arms want to find the gesture which corresponds to it; a G has a different feeling to an E, a natural a different feeling to a sharp or flat.⁷ This tells me that there must be a real connection between the sounding tones or degrees of the scale and the corresponding angle-gestures.

Before relating a further experience, which may help others experience the nature of the relationship between the music and the angles, I need to give a short account of the background which led up to it: Jacques Lusseyran describes how every object exerts an impression, so that a blind person can 'see' it; the size of a room, a doorway, the form of a chair or the outline of a chain of mountains. He says that this is an ability we all possess; it is only a matter of being attentive. In testing the reality of this, I quickly made the discovery that each form also gives me a definite feeling—a soul-feeling, felt in the body and that this can also be felt through looking with the eye. Over the years, I have practiced looking at form or gesture—whether in painting, nature, architecture or sculpture—and developing my sensitivity for the soul-feeling that it evokes. Through this, for example, I came to the experience that the transition from one form of the capitals in the First Goetheanum to another gives rise to a feeling similar to that experienced when a melody moves from one tone to another, or when the eye moves from colour to colour in a painting.

Secondly, in Dornach a small group of eurythmists, speakers, musicians and scientists meet regularly under the name 'Kairos' to research the etheric foundations of eurythmy. At one such meeting we listened to, and watched, the first three degrees of a scale being played and done in eurythmy (archetypal gestures). We found it too much to have to hear the music and watch the gestures at the same time, so we first listened to the three degrees several times and then watched the archetypal gestures done silently several times. Observing this in the way characterised above, the soul-feeling I experience through hearing the intervals of the scale

was exactly recreated by the form of the eurythmy gesture. I thereby gained a new confirmation for eurythmy as visible singing. The feeling received from hearing the music is the same as that which arises from seeing the form of the angles!

Now, having helped, I hope, to unravel the problem of the angles, I would like to pass on to further questions and things which I believe point to possibilities, and a certain necessity, for further developments.

Differentiation between different types of the same interval—a further possibility for experiencing the angle and interval gestures more closely. Possibilities for further development?

Experience has led me to the belief that the tones and angle-gestures can be developed further and a deeper relationship to, and understanding of, eurythmy and music can be achieved, as long as the changes are based on direct perception and not mere theory. I am convinced that the means for developing eurythmy are inherent in the art itself; it is merely a question of attentiveness whether we can develop it or not.

One possibility might be found through differentiating more finely between the tones and intervals of different types of scales. By way of example, I would like to look more closely at the interval of the third in C major. Steiner says that with the major third 'the soul speaks with itself'.⁸ Many eurythmy students cannot experience this when they are told to feel how the tone, or interval, sounds from the piano, and they put it down to 'being unmusical'. Why is this so? If, for example, we compare three different thirds with one another, interesting discoveries are made, and we can begin to find answers: Listen to the Apollonian (Pythagorean) third 81:64 and compare it with the just (Dionysian) major third 5:4 and the equal-tempered major third 63:50.⁹ Now compare the feeling when doing the interval-gesture of the third as given in Eurythmy as Visible Singing to each of these different degrees of the scale. Further, do the same with the archetypal angle for the third degree and with the gesture for the tone.

I find the most satisfactory correspondence is found: (1) between the interval-gesture for the third as given in *Eurythmy as Visible Singing* and the just major third; (2) between the archetypal angle third and the Apollonian third. Although the brightness of the 81:64 third can be indicated by making the back-space lighter or standing brighter in the space, it cannot be achieved in the interval gesture for the third. This brightness, however, is to be obtained, in space and in the gesture, with the angle. On the other hand, the angle cannot be made intimate enough for the 5:4 third which almost sounds minor, it is so inward; this inwardness is to be found in the interval gesture.

Regarding these intervals there is a helpful indication in the faculty-meeting at the Eurythmeum.¹⁰ Steiner talks about the connection of the musical intervals to the proportions of the bones. The interval which determines the musical system to which he refers is the third, and the third he gives is the just (Dionysian) 5:4 major third. This is the third we found above which fitted best to the interval-gesture of the third connected to the streaming through the bones as given in *Eurythmy as Visible Singing*.

The equal-tempered third poses a problem. With the interval-gesture, a sort of correspondence is achieved when it is done with the arm relatively far outstretched from the gestalt. This is the way most eurythmy students do it when

asked to do the gesture, as they feel it from the sound on the piano. They are then corrected and told 'that is far too far out, do it intimately, 'the soul converses with itself''. The angle-gesture is also unsatisfactory. One approaches it somewhat when the angle is made about half-way between the angles for the tones E and F. In fact, many intervals of the equal-tempered scale do not correspond with either the interval-gestures or the angles and that they sound 'outside' of and without relation to the human being; they simply do not 'fit'. I have no answer, but it is obvious from this that the compromise of the equal-tempered scale is not very suited to eurythmy (assuming that one really wants to achieve a correspondence between the gesture and the feeling of the tone or interval) and that new scales have to be found and instruments made which are capable of playing them.¹¹

The tuning method discovered by Maria Renold, which contains Steiner's concert-pitch indications,¹² has a beautiful correspondence to the archetypal gestures. It is therefore a step in the right direction. But a tuning which also includes the just (Dionysian) intervals still needs to be developed.

(1) See articles by Alan Stott and Reinhard Wedemeier in Newsletters Nos. 36, 37 and 39.

(2) See final section below, which indicates why I consider that many tones and intervals of equal-tempered tuning do not correspond with the eurythmy gestures.

(3) See *Ton und Laut eurythmie durch Elena Zuccoli*. Verlag Walter Keller, Dornach 1997, p. 15.

(4) It is interesting to note that the human figure on the left motif of the red window in the Second Goetheanum shines from within, whereas that in the right hand motif is lit from without, the gestalt being dark!

(5) Perhaps Alan is suggesting doing two archetypes at the same time, but in practice this also proves impossible; although it is possible to imagine both at once, it is not possible for one person to make them visible at the same time. [It is not 'impossible' to do more than one thing at the same time in eurythmy—or when cycling, or even walking. My descriptions report the daily practice and teaching of Dorothea Mier, Friedhelm Gillert, Ursula-Ingrid Gillert, Margarete Proskauer and Maren Stott with whom I have collaborated throughout my working life. My efforts to interpret Steiner always try to avoid 'mere theory'. A.S.]

(6) See Newsletter No. 36.

(7) Although tones pose a problem for musician and eurythmist alike because Steiner puts emphasis on the inaudible in music—e.g., the interval degree behind a tone—many musicians also have the ability to recognise a tone according to its own individual quality, independent of a degree of the scale. For example, the quality of C I experience to have a certain corny graininess in contrast, for example, to G which has a quality of light-filled breath. Personally, I consider it justified to want to represent tones in eurythmy when it is such qualities which one strives to fill the gesture with. Our consciousness today is still removed from experiencing the quality of a tone as a being. But the fact that we give names to the tones points tentatively to the being living in a tone, especially when the solfeggio names (Do, Re, Me etc.) are considered, which arise from a whole verse.

(8) Rudolf Steiner *Eurythmy as Visible Singing*, GA 278. Tr. and commentary by Alan Stott, Anastasi, Weobley, 1998.

[Lecture 2, p. 19: “The experience of the third is very intimate. You know that what you settle (*abmachen*) with the third you settle with yourself alone.” Ed. note]

(9) Here a longer monochord (c. 90 cm) gives the necessary accuracy and is of invaluable help.

(10) Rudolf Steiner. *Eurythmy: Its Birth and Development*. GA 277a. Tr. Alan Stott. Anastasi Ltd, Weobley, 2002. Email: enquiries@anastasi.co.uk

(11) It is obvious that Steiner did not develop the eurythmy gestures from the sounding tone or interval, but from a spiritual reality wanting to come to expression through the tones. Because of this, the quality of the gesture has an effect on the way we hear a tone or interval (e.g., when the interval gesture for the third is done inwardly then we hear the tempered third this way—we recognise this quality in the interval). Through this one may rightfully say that it is not necessary to have tones and intervals that fit to the gestures. But, to use an analogy, is this not like listening to someone giving lecture in a language that is foreign to him? The lecturer is unable to find the words which give full expression to the thought, but because the listener understands the thought, the words then take on the meaning required. An interesting phenomena, but isn't the ideal to find words which give full expression to the thought?

(12) See *Intervals, Scales, Tones and the Concert Pitch $c = 128$ Hz* by Maria Renold (and also my contribution in Part 4), forthcoming Temple Lodge Press, London, early 2005.

Frédéric Chopin

24 Préludes pour le pianoforte

Third party views on the dispute between Alan Stott and Robert Kolben
Julian Clarke, DE-Stuttgart

Chopin's 24 *Préludes* undoubtedly constitute a unified cycle for actual performance. 24 Preludes-and-Fuges by Bach form a highly impressive cycle in a conceptual sense, but are clearly too long to be performed at one go, whereas the Chopin *Préludes* realize the key structure in a very carefully constructed sequence within the dimensions of, say, a sonata by Beethoven or Chopin himself. An important aspect is of course that the order is the circle of fifths rather than the chromatic scale, so that the pieces are linked by related keys rather than separated by the repeated shift to a distant one. The alternation of major and minor provides the contrast necessary to prevent the repeated close relationship from becoming monotonous – as could easily happen in a cycle consisting of so many numbers. Contrast and a grouping of the pieces into larger units are further effected by style and character, in particular by the tempi: *Prélude* I (C Major) fast, 2 (A Minor) slow; 3 (G Major) fast, 4 (E Minor) slow; 5 (D Major) fast, 6 (B Minor) slow. This leads initially to the grouping in pairs on which Alan places great emphasis. A continuation of this alternation of quick major-key pieces with slow minor-key ones would however be hopelessly mechanical. Fortunately there is also such a thing as a medium tempo, which Chopin uses either between a slow piece and a quick one or as contrast between two quick ones. 7 (A major) is an example of medium tempo (*Andantino*), followed by 8 (F# minor) fast and 9 (E major) slow. No. 9 has a broad, weighty conclusion, whereas No. 10 is a genuine prelude in character – short, volatile, inconclusive (ending piano without *ritenuto*). The result is that 9 + 10 do *not* in practice form a real pair, and instead 7 + 8 + 9 form a group of three. (It may be relevant that whereas No. 8 is in the relative minor key of No. 7 according to our 'Aeolian' concept of minor it is in the relative minor of No. 9 according to the older 'Dorian' concept which long prevailed in France.) Hereafter Chopin avoids the rather static grouping in pairs: No. 11 is another short volatile piece with real prelude character ending *diminuendo* without *ritenuto*, so that 10 + 11 form a double prelude to the substantial No. 12. (Only here do three fast pieces come in succession.) 14 again does not form a real pair with 13, but leads on to 15. The group of three 13 + 14 + 15 (slow – short quick transition – slow) can easily be felt to be the emotional centre of the work, after which there is rising excitement of the end due to the many substantial quick dramatic numbers (16, 18, 22, 24) with only one – short – slow piece and three in medium tempo. 16 + 17 + 18 form another group of three (very fast, medium, very fast), with 17 ending indeterminately on the mediant and 18 continuing with the same notes and ending so emphatically that it could almost be the end of the whole work. 19 is further separated from 18 by also being in very quick tempo. Chopin repeats the use of a medium tempo in No. 21 to avoid an alternating pattern of fast and slow. (In fact he gives no tempo indication for the piece, but it must indubitably lie between the broad *Largo* of No. 20 and the *Molto Agitato* of No. 22.) The last six numbers can again best be grouped in threes: 21 ends fairly broadly and conclusively, whilst 22 + 23 + 24 (fast and dramatic – *moderato intermezzo* – fast, dramatic and substantial) make a very definite and impressive conclusion to the whole. It should at all events be clear that Chopin crafted the sequence with great care to a convincing cycle, even before we consider the questions of style which I raised or the motif-relationships for which Alan and Robert are looking.

On the basis of recurring motifs they try to construct a 'thematic development'. We should indeed practise the honest scepticism that Alan recommends! Recurring characteristic turns of phrase are by no means the same thing as a development; the same elements may just as well recur in other works by the same or other composers. Amongst these motifs they count on the one hand repeated notes, on the other melodic figures with a second and a third in opposite directions. The first 'example' quoted for this pattern from No. 1 is however not actually a motif, as the notes in question are taken not merely from two different motifs but even from two different 4-bar phrases. Robert also describes all larger intervals as a 'heightening' or 'enlargement' of seconds and thirds. The result could be that every repetition of a note, regardless of musical qualities (harmony change or not, rhythmic pattern *etc.*), is classed as Motif X and every other interval pair as Motif Y – then X and Y can be guaranteed to recur extremely frequently! A third 'motif' is the 'dotted rhythm', for which Nrs. 1 and 2 are cited irrespective of the nature of the music that is thus notated. In No. 2 it is actually a double dot, meaning the length relationship 7:1 rather than the 3:1 which is normal modern usage for a single dot. In No. 1 Chopin does not use the dot in this modern sense, and the relationship is 2:1, 4:1 or 5:1. Here we are in danger of calling *all* notes of equal length Motif X and *all* notes of unequal length Motif Y! Let us instead consider the musical qualities expressed in the two pieces. They are polar opposites. No. 2 is cumbersome, heavy, awkward, rough, earthy. No. 1 is buoyant, ebullient, elegant, polished, airy-tofiery. In No. 1 the notes of the melody are largely off the beat, the short notes fly into the void instead of falling into the weight of the stressed beat. This is the rhythm of the French language, without real syllabic stress and with frequent 'feminine endings' (silent 'e'); it is a piece of French sophistication. Chopin was however not only French but also Polish; the remarkably modern No. 2 is dedicated without concession to the Polish earth, and has a primitive peasant quality with the short notes after the dot always falling into earthbound heaviness – a heavily accented Polish musical language. These two contrasting languages are the real 'Letimotives' which run through the cycle. Of course! The genuine dotted rhythms of Nos. 7 and 10 are, as Alan says, mazurka rhythms, Polish dance rhythms. If one compares these Préludes with the Mazurkas of Chopin or Szymanowski one finds considerably more dotted rhythms and ostinati in the Mazurkas. If, on the other hand, one compares the Préludes with the eminently French Nocturnes of Fauré (beautiful music, very suitable for eurythmy!) one will find far fewer dotted rhythms and ostinati in the Nocturnes, which however – to a far greater extent than Chopin's Préludes – are full of smoothly gliding melodic phrases with many small intervals, see-sawing seconds and thirds, and indeed Bb-A-C-B sequences (German B-A-C-H). Where Fauré writes this sequence – literally, without Alan's re-interpretation of Cb as B – it is most unlikely to have any significance beyond a French melodic spinning-on. As a Frenchman he has no reason to play with German names. To the cyclic structures we have already sketched we can thus add those arising from Chopin's most personal characteristic: the alternation (and combination, as in No. 4) of French and Polish elements. This alternation is just as carefully planned as the previously discussed aspects. Just as in the question of tempo there is a mediating element between slow and fast, so there is a third element between the French and the Polish, namely the Italian (which played a major role in Parisian musical life). No. 6 (between the entirely French No. 5 and the mazurka-like No. 7) imitates an Italian Baroque cello sonata movement; No. 9 is an Italian bass aria with trills and little colorature – combined with such a noteworthy Polish right-hand part that the aria often gets overlooked; No. 15 (beginning and end) combines French elements with Belcanto in the style of the Nocturnes; No. 21 ('Cantabile' = Italian singing style) derives closely from Italian aria.

These were my first purely musical views. If one wants to associate number or motif constructions with this music, it would be desirable to offer some reason to think that Chopin was interested in such things. Bach's interest in numbers in his compositions is historically and textually well documented (with important autograph bar numbers and so on), whereas such considerations look just as irrelevant in connection with Chopin as with, for example, the Fauré Nocturnes, where Alan could easily be even more successful with number games. In contrast, the significance of Chopin's Frenchness, his Polishness and his Italian Belcanto connections (particularly to the works of his friend Bellini) is beyond all doubt. Questions of proportion, such as the position of a dynamic climax in a piece, are however not the same thing as number games. A climax necessarily divides a piece into a 'length before' and a 'length after', and the proportion between the two naturally has a musical effect which is as important to Chopin as to any other composer of the 19th century. Short pieces by many composers – for example, the eighth Fauré Nocturne – have a climax at the (larger) Golden Section, which lies at end of bar 62 in a piece of 100 bars. This leaves the right amount of time for the composer to effect a subsequent calming rounding-off of the piece. Pieces with introductory rather than concluding character accordingly often have a *later* climax, so that the feeling of rounding-off is *avoided* (Préludes 5, 11, 14), whereas pieces with the climax at the Golden Section more often end a group (Préludes 4, 9 – where Robert thought he saw a different proportion –, middle section of 15). No. 1 (as Robert observes) and No. 8 are however also fairly accurate examples of the Golden Section. If Chopin had approached the matter by calculation instead of musical sensibility, the proportions might have been even more accurate and the music less convincing! The present considerations of style and character are surely much nearer to the substance of this work than number and motif constructions are. Robert tries to see Chopin in the service of the German Folk Soul, Alan in the service of not so much the English as the Irish-Celtic Folk-Soul. Far more relevant would be a serious study of his services for the French and Polish Folk-Souls.