

## How to Pronounce and Use the Vowels in Eurythmy in Relation to the English Language

### Preview

*Words are made up of consonants and vowels. Consonants live in the experiences of the outer natural world, whereas vowels express an inner world.*

*There is a difference between in the pronunciation of vowels and consonants. Vowels are created by a steady flow of air, whereas with consonants, the flow of air is stopped, formed, or accelerated by movements of the mouth and tongue. In the English language, vowels interweave constantly.*

*In Italian or German, on the other hand, vowels are much more used in their pure, archetypal form, meaning there is a more direct correspondence with the written letter and the sound you hear. This is not the case in the English language.*

*In the audio files you can hear and practise how the pure vowels sound using German words as examples.*

*If you practice alone, you perform the movement in silence but listen inwardly.*

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### The English Language

The English language is highly adaptive and over millennia has absorbed many different languages (Anglo Saxon, French, Latin...). Its nature is to be alive and ever evolving. It takes in, transmutes, and moves.

### Vowels and Consonants

In Eurythmy, we express the elements of audible language through movements. Words, thoughts, feelings, even grammar is expressed through movement. In the case of sounds, we distinguish between vowels and consonants:

- Vowels are created by a steady flow of air that causes the vocal cords to vibrate. The strength of the airflow determines the volume, the tension of the vocal cords the pitch. The different vowels are created by the position of the mouth, the tension of the body and the mouth adds the colour.
- In the case of consonants, the streaming air is stopped, formed, or accelerated by movements of the mouth and tongue. For instance, for B the air becomes compressed behind closed lips and the sound B comes about when the compressed air is released. The vocal cords are not needed for this.

### Seven Formative Principles of Vowels

To approach the realm of vowels, Eurythmy discriminates seven unique formative principles which completely differ from each other:

1. receiving
2. crossing
3. stretching
4. rounding
5. contracting
6. stroking
7. growing

When you apply these qualities to your vocal organs, you will notice, that these are the formative principles of seven archetypal vowels. In these you will find a relationship to the qualities of the seven planets Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, Moon and Sun.

As the English language is oriented towards connecting and interweaving elements rather than emphasising the individual sound as in the German language, that is why you will hardly find the archetypes audible in the English language. As in life, everything is in a process of transition, is on its way from one to the other. English lives in the in-between.

### **Pronunciation**

When archetypal vowels are sounded, mouth and lips do not move. At the same time, they are inwardly accompanied by intense feelings. The English language however plays with the archetypal sounds creating diphthongs which interplay and move between archetypes.

Because the pronunciation of letters differs from the names, confusion is bound to arise when the name of the letter is used in place of the sound.

Since it is difficult to identify single archetypal sounds in the English language, the following is only an indication.

<b>Archetypal Vowel</b>	<b>English Pronunciation</b>
German A, Receiving	ah as in star
German E, Crossing	no identical sound in English. Similar to a as in gate.
German I, Stretching	ee as in feet
German O, Rounding	no identical sound in English. Similar to o as in "load"
German U, Contracting	oo as in moon
German Ei, Stroking	i as in high
German Au, Growing	ow as in how

*Audio samples of the archetypal vowels can be found here: [www.eurythmy4you.com/vowel-audio](http://www.eurythmy4you.com/vowel-audio)*

### **Vowels in Eurythmy Therapy**

When you express language artistically through eurythmy, you let go of the name and you fully engage with what you are hearing and how the sound of a vowel is shaped within a word. You immerse yourself in the flow of formative forces which the audible sounds bring to you.

In eurythmy therapy you are involved in addressing the archetypal sounds because they have a direct connection to and invite the formative and healing forces of our body intelligence. In therapeutic eurythmy you

- create the energy flow of an archetypal sound within your body,
- let your body respond with the corresponding movement,
- open an inner listening space which allows the sound to unfold its healing process within you.

To help you with this, a eurythmy therapist speaks the sound while you are executing your movement, and by so doing, supports you to create the flow of your movement and your inner listening process.

If you practice alone, you perform the movement in silence but listen inwardly.

### **The Inner Process**

Openness, inner listening and an inner hold are preconditions for sounds to reveal themselves.

Sounds are beings and in order to develop a relationship to them, to have a dialogue with them, you have to create space in your being. It is through your interest, intention and active participation that you approach and meet them. What counts is the process, the journey.

Eurythmy wants to foster this.

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### **Two Poems\* for 'pure' vowels in the A-E-I-O-U order**

Be thou a shining star above me,  
Be thou an angel to protect me,  
Be thou a beam of light to lead me,  
Be thou a rose of love within me,  
Be thou the beauty, truth and goodness,  
Today, tomorrow and always.

Guarded from harm,  
Cared for by angels,  
Here stand we,  
Loving and bold,  
Truthful and good

*\* unknown authors*