

A painting depicting the Holy Spirit as a white dove with outstretched wings, descending upon the Virgin Mary, who is seated in the center. She is surrounded by other figures, possibly saints or angels, in a church-like setting with red and blue tones. The overall style is classical and religious.

2023

Christmas Conference

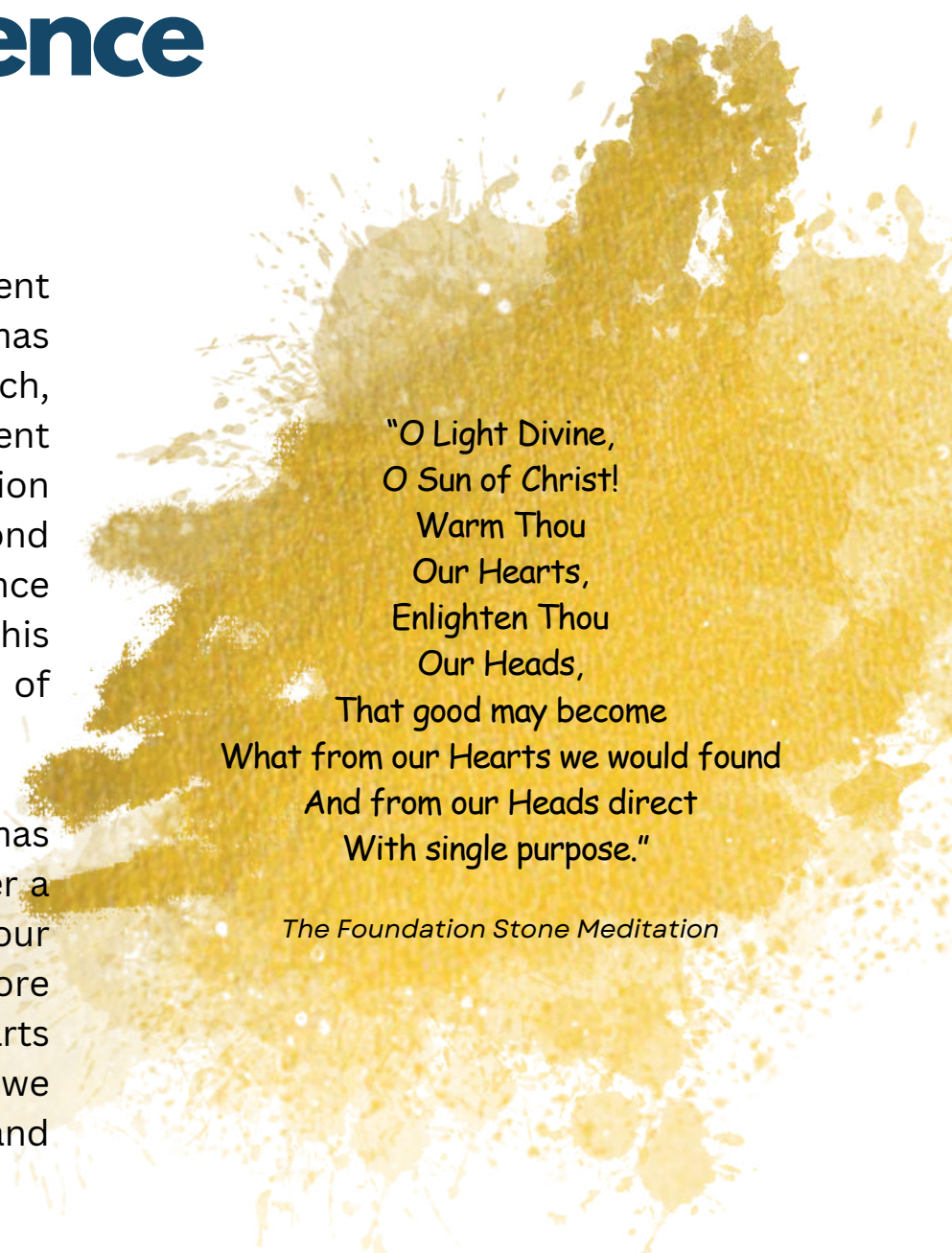
**Recognising and Affirming the Mystery Deed of
the Christmas Conference as We Continue to
Cultivate the Life of the Spirit in Our Time**

100 years since the first Christmas Conference

A celebration

We welcomed your participation in this important event to commemorate and celebrate the Christmas Conference which was held 100 years ago in Dornach, Switzerland. This was an earthly and supersensible event held through Rudolf Steiner to place the Foundation Stone for the Anthroposophical Society, the second Goetheanum and the future unfolding of Spiritual Science on earth; into the hearts of those present. It is on this Foundation that we stand today when we work out of Anthroposophy on Earth.

On this, the 100th Anniversary of the Christmas Conference, it was our deepest wish to gather together a group of like-minded, like-striving souls to raise our consciousness to understand what was placed before humankind 100 years ago so that through this our hearts may be warmed and our thinking enlivened so that we may strive towards the future with Michael strength and Christened heart for the good of mankind.



"O Light Divine,
O Sun of Christ!
Warm Thou
Our Hearts,
Enlighten Thou
Our Heads,
That good may become
What from our Hearts we would found
And from our Heads direct
With single purpose."

The Foundation Stone Meditation



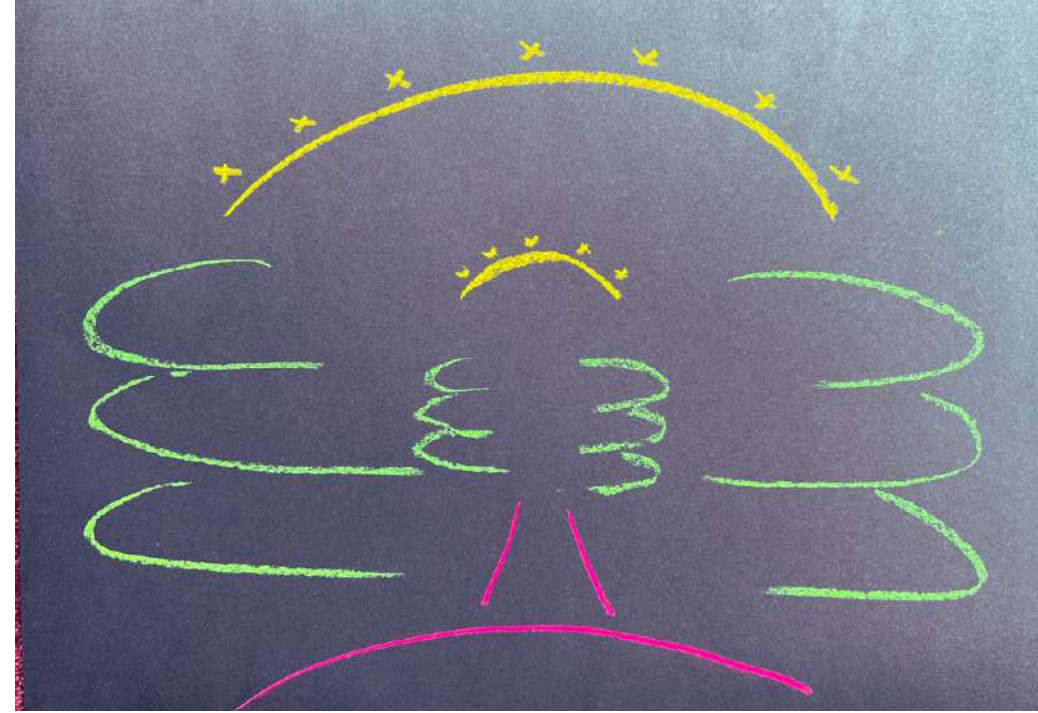
Conference participants

The Michael Amphitheatre

Day One

The Foundation

The first day would be a foundation of understanding about the mystery deed of the Christmas Conference, Foundation Stone and Foundation Stone Meditation. An exploration too of how these resound within our souls today, 100 years after the event.



Lecture:

The Mystery Deed of the Christmas Conference

Helen Vogel

The wealth of nourishing lectures, workshops, and conversations during the Australian Christmas Conference has encouraged me to continue striving to build knowledge of the light of Christ within myself; my deeds; and fellow human beings.

Bethany Nette



Lecture:

The Esoteric Musicology in Relation to the Zodiac
& 7 Planets & 7 Life Processes"

Birgith Lugosi



Lecture:

The Divine Plan

Philip Quenby



The second day would bring thoughts and Imaginations from Cosmic spheres that imbue Anthroposophy and lie behind the Christmas Conference.

Day Two

The Cosmos

Day Three

The Human Being

The third day would explore the human being on earth striving for balance and the temptations of Lucifer and Ahriman - the reality in which we live our life.

Presentation:
The Being Sophia

Cheryl Nekvapil



Lecture:
Humanity between
Michael & the Dragon

Glenn Rawlinson



Lecture:
The Creation & Appreciation of Art
from the Perspective of Spiritual
Science

Lukas Ryan



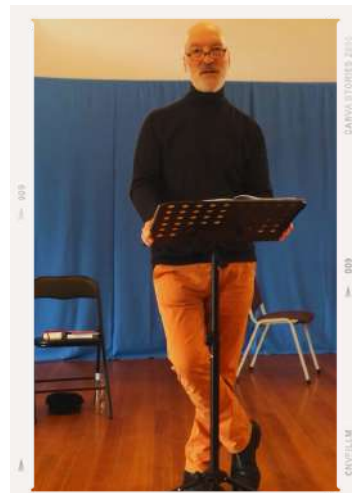
Day Four

The Practical

The fourth day would reveal aspects
of practical work in the world out of
Anthroposophical striving.

Presentation:
Community building without hierarchy

Rod Tomlinson



Presentation:
Healing through Grace
for a new Community: A
Nurse's Perspective"

Jane Bradshaw



Lecture:

Into the Future: May we hear the call that has been resounding. May we truly direct with single purpose what we from our hearts now found. Which deeds do we enact into the future as humanity is called to take up the redemption of darkness and the winning of love born freedom for the cosmos?

Peggy Day



Day Five

The Call

The fifth day we would have the possibility of hearing the call that is resounding for us in our time and the question; "Can we unite with this call? Can we from our hearts find this?"



These days together have served to restore a renewed sense of the community which we are all part of in such a way that despite the tyranny of distance, that spirit can continue to nurture, sustain and support us throughout our lives' distances.

I can still hear those whispers of the new mysteries between the lines of your sharing Helen and those resounding choirs of angels whose circling round of 'Holy, Holy, Holy' you made audible Philip, and the revealing depths and heights of reflection and listening which you opened up each morning Jennifer and the therapeutic warmth of your vocation which you evoked so movingly on Saturday Jane.

Rod Tomlinson



We touched the spirit in our work and offered back up to Rudolf Steiner, Michael, the Christ and the Hierarchies the echo and resounding of the Christmas Conference.

Helen Vogel



Eurythmy Performances

Foundation Stone Rhythms & Evening Performance

Performed by Aurora Australis

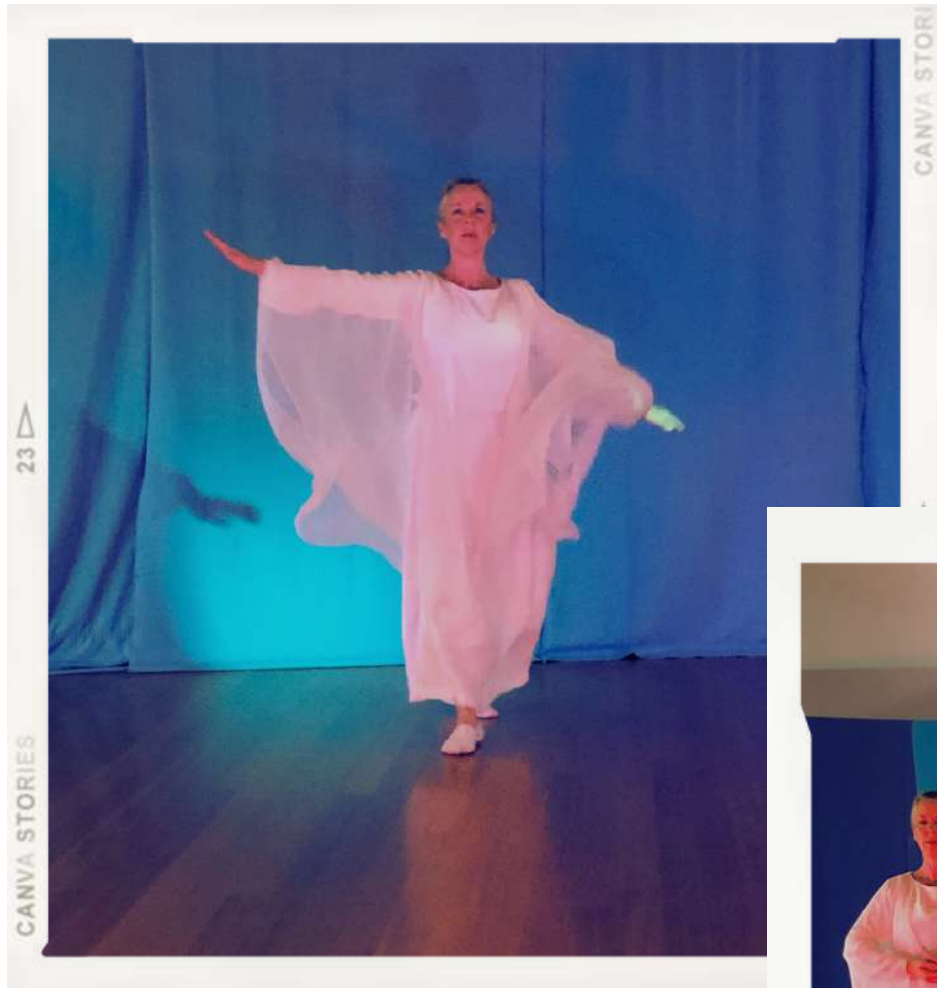


Each of the 5 mornings the Foundation Stone rhythms were spoken by Birgith and performed by the Eurythmists to music improvised according to Zodiac and planetary gestures, indicated by Steiner.

Shane Rhodes, pianist

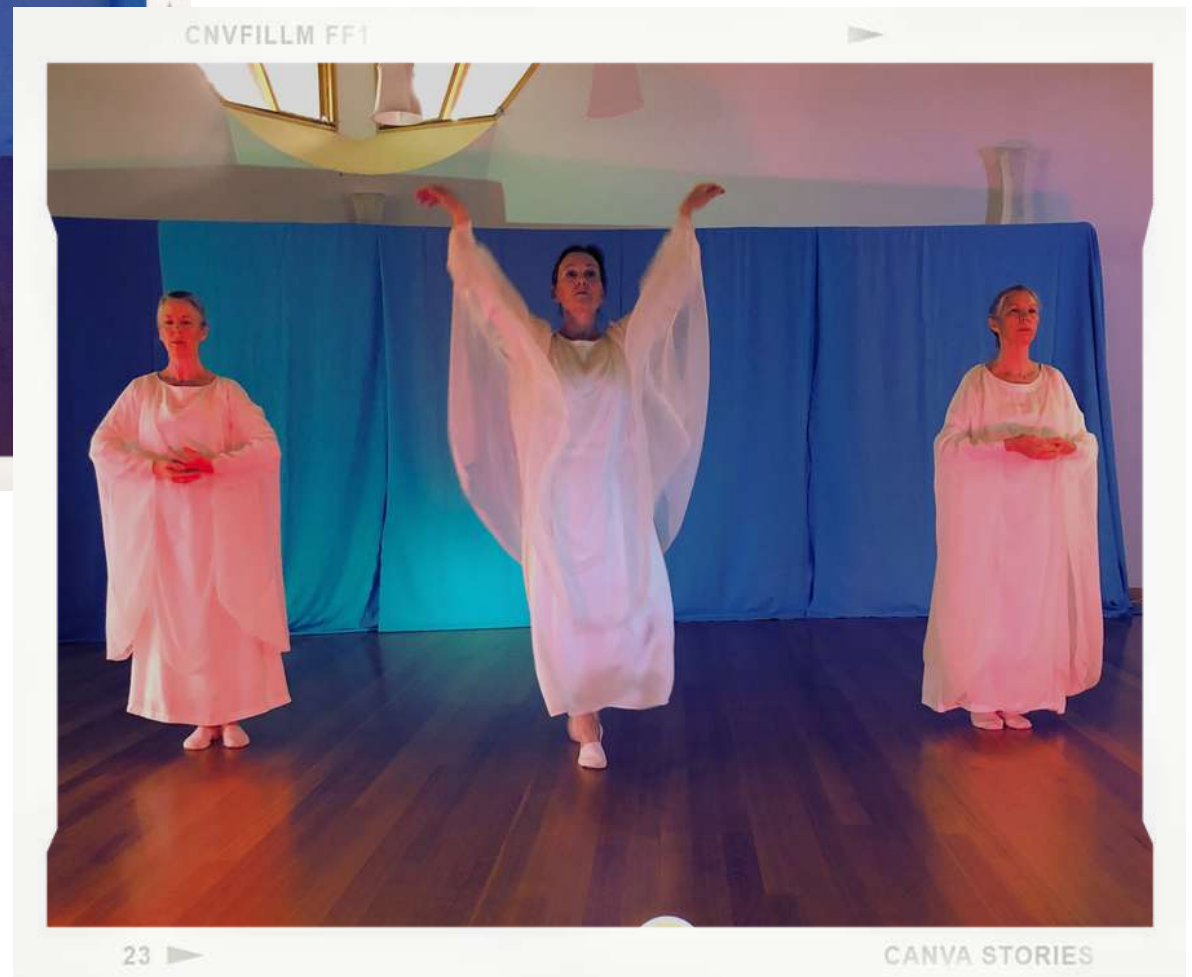
Focused and composed, three women moving sections of the Foundation Stone Meditation expertly stepping to Birgith's speaking, perfection achieved; deepening each day

Dale Irving



Presenting 5 of the 7 rhythms each morning has been the most wonderful experience, to not just perform but to inwardly understand what Eurythmy is, who carries it, where it comes from and how we can use it to speak back to the gods and each other: to share in this powerful form of communication.

Sarah Lohrey



I practice the Foundation Stone daily and I know the words so I could see them in a physical being manifested in front of me. It was a beautiful way to start the day. Some of the visuals of the hand movements when they represented Christ and the angels were performed with so much reverence I could feel the fluttering of wings.

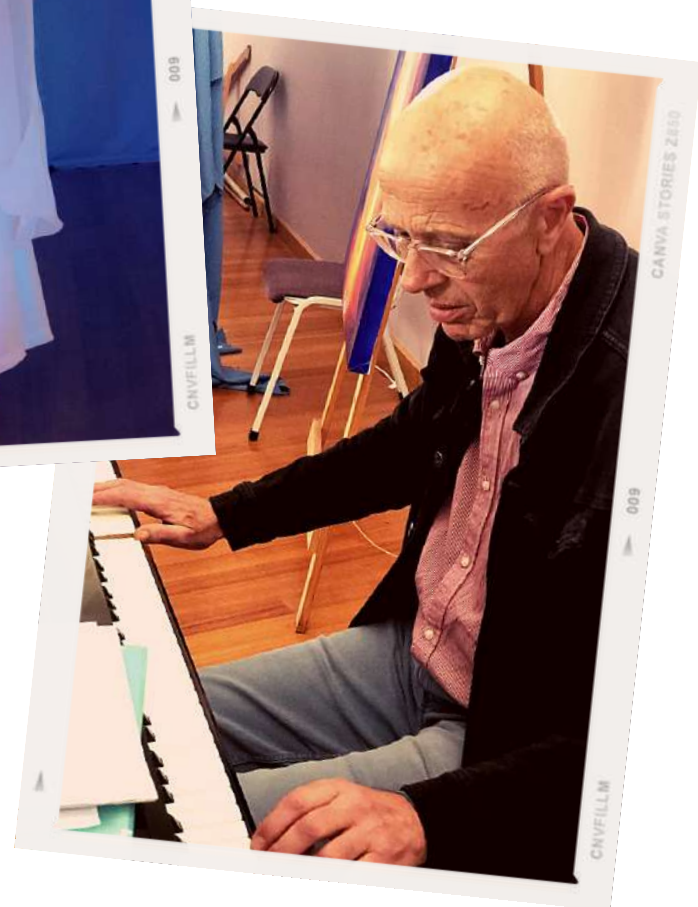
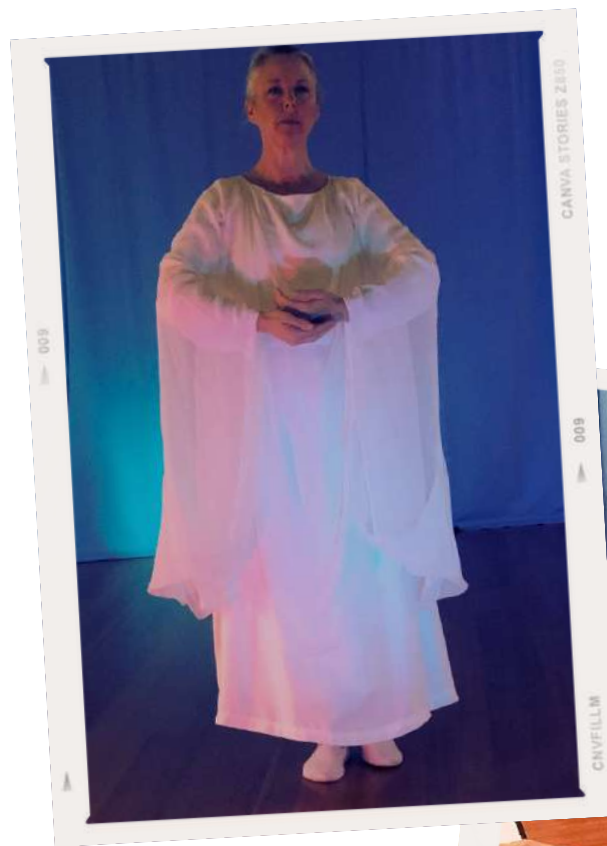
Cole Bradshaw

Fiona Couttie

On the opening night and other events, Birgith Lugosi, Susan Gould, Kelly Papas and Sarah Lohrey lifted our will, our hearts and our minds with glorious performances. Shane Rhode's piano accompaniment included music from Grieg, Debussy, Hauer, Steffan and Chopin.


Birgith's opening solo blazed with fiery warmth and colour and was held by her extraordinary artistry and sense of gravitas. The music was Marcello, Adagio from Oboe Concerto arranged by J.S.Bach. This was followed by 13 beautiful solos and group pieces performed by the 4 Eurythmists shimmering in exquisite colour harmonies. For me, the grace, serenity and colour of Susan, Kelly and Sarah's performances filled the Eurythmy hall with a sense of the sublime.





Janina Papas

Wonderful and wonder filled. I could feel it in my body. The movements became inner gestures; an inner experience. The harmony in the group was palpable because they had worked together for so long; they are women of such experience.



To know me
Is to breathe with me
To breathe with me
Is to listen deeply
To listen deeply
Is to connect

Aboriginal elder Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann

Deep Listening

Dadirri





Drama Presentations

Phil Ingelmo & others





The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

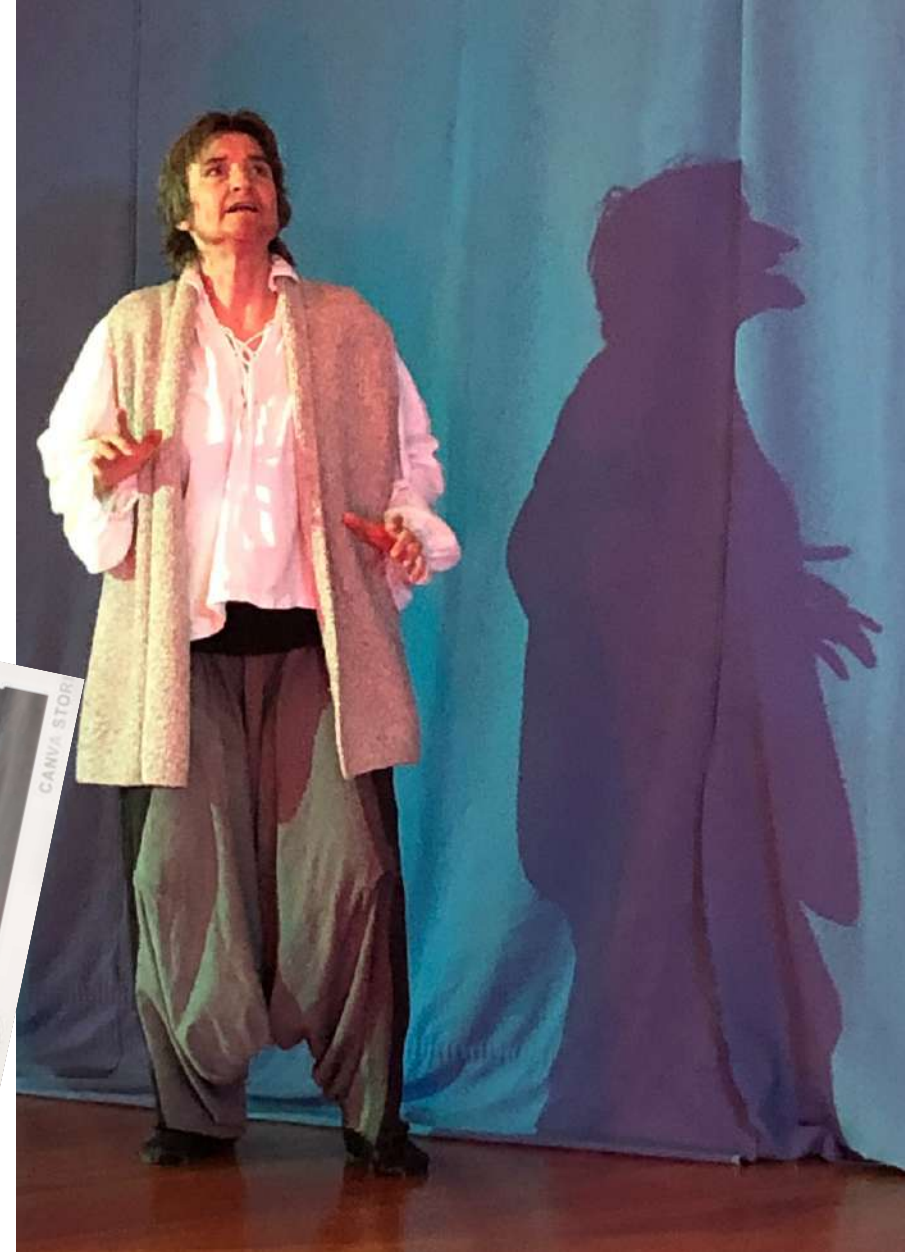
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

**Performed by
Katrina Stowe**



The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, an old poem, has relevant pictures for today of conscience, redemption and love as a transformative power. Coleridge writes with such vivid pictures and my experience of what people have enjoyed is that through creative speech and the embodiment of the character they can experience the images come to life in the space.

Katrina Stowe



Vivien Hillman

I was particularly moved by the The Rime of the Ancient Mariner performance. A poem much loved and often quoted by my mother, who learned it from her father, who came out to NZ as a sailor on one of those old ships in early settlement days.

Each breath rehearsed, every move considered, Katrina Stowe vanished and the Ancient Mariner stepped his lament. We met each catastrophe with him. The studiously developed and rehearsed piece moved quickly beyond a well-created piece of theatre to an authentic compelling experience.

Dale Irving



Speech Workshop

Annika Andersdotter

In this workshop we explored the Foundation Stone Meditation and its Rhythms through Creative Speech





Singing Workshop

Dale Jones

Dale re-presented his musical composition of the Foundation Stone Meditation for choir and piano. This workshop offered the opportunity for participants to approach the Foundation Stone Meditation through music, specifically the harmonisation of human voices.



Eurythmy Workshop

Birgith Lugosi

We explored Tone Eurythmy. Participants had the opportunity to experience the Intervals in relation to our physical organs and planets; beat, rhythms, and pitch; an introduction to the Saturn melody in relation to the spleen - a health giving exercise to strengthen the immune system.

Bethany Nette

The tonal eurythmy workshop helped me reconnect with my passion for music. As I sensed the spirit within the music, for the first time I felt myself connecting with music with my whole being.





Art Workshop

Katherine Rudolph

This workshop focused on the columns of the First Goetheanum, their interpretation into hexameter poetry as well as the artistic, therapeutic, and social inspiration that they provide for our times in relation to the mysteries of 7-fold processes.



The Being Spohia
with Cheryl Nekvapil

The Journey through the Class Lessons
with Glenn Rawlinson

Mental Health & Social Hygiene in Communities (Thursday)
Deference to Authority or Mutual Reliance on Colleagues? (Friday)
Anachronistic Hierarchies or Precipitous Anarchism? (Saturday)
with Rod Tomlinson

Space for the youth to meet and work together
with Phil Ingelmo

Financial Literacy in Anthroposophy
with Matthew Bond

Conversation Groups

Working Together

We were a large conversation group, so after preparatory conversations about what Rudolf Steiner was striving to develop with the Teachers at the Free Waldorf School – a new way to associate with others effectively and harmoniously without compromising the freedom and individuality of one another – we divided ourselves into three smaller groups to experience what a completely free, anthroposophical conversation and sharing may feel like. When we shared something of what we had each experienced, I was astonished to hear three accurate characterisations, by participants from each of the three groups, of three quotes of Rudolf Steiner’s advice, which I had prepared to bring to the group but had not found time to share with them. Not only did it demonstrate the efficacy of our communal inner striving to reach spiritual scientific concepts of immediate relevance to us, but I was astonished at the impact that each of these had on me when offered in an ensouled, immediate form, out of the living experience and thinking of my fellow anthroposophists, in contrast to when I read Steiner’s formulations of them. I felt the content of the ideas penetrating my thinking and transforming me, in a way that reading them – and even recognizing their deep significance – in Steiner’s printed lectures had not. Our ensouled, communal arrival at these ideas had refreshed and revitalized the expression of these insights with potent force. The effect and value of these three ideas will remain with me for a long time to come but the experience has left me wishing that I could meet with these same fellow anthroposophists weekly for the rest of my days.

Rod Tomlinson

In hindsight I realised that we did indeed experience Sophia, the Holy Spirit throughout the day, the way we listened with good will and participated with inner striving to unite with all that the presenters wanted to bring. The conversation group we partook in didn't bring me answers but in the after image of the conference experience my heart found the answer. And today reading again *The Foundation Stone* by Zeylmans von Emmichoven I share with you this quote:

“What can it mean, for instance, that the 'Spirit Light of the World ' entered the Stream of Earthly Being? It is the Light of the Holy Spirit that is referred to here, The Light Divine of Sophia. it may be remembered that according to Rudolf Steiner, the true name of the Nathan child was Sophia. This Sophia entered the stream of earthly being.”

I do feel in reflection that this striving at the conference was an expression of the Holy Spirit being active within us.

Annika Andersdotter

Conversation Groups

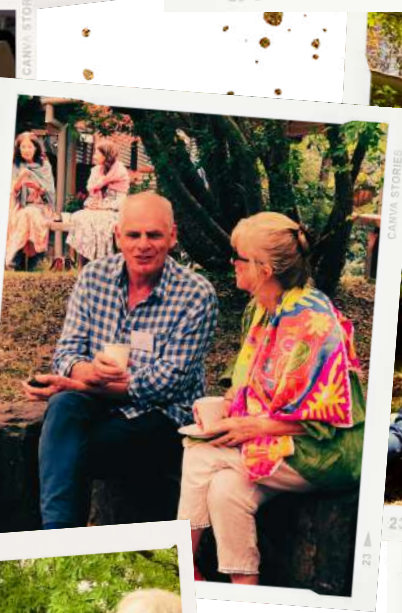
Some reflections from participants

Now, as I sit down to reflect upon our three days of conversation, I have the feeling that over the three days, we humbly invited Sophia into our midst. In our final moving conversation, in our heartfelt interest in each other's questions and observations, I felt her participation in our living exploration of this great mystery. As we named qualities – wisdom, compassion, forgiveness, truth, service, understanding, inner-aliveness, love - that we had awoken to over the previous two days of reading from texts Cheryl provided, and through conversations in small groups, I felt her presence in the room. Could this be possible? That through our loving attention, the veil for a moment lifted?

Noela Maletz

The finance conversation group, facilitated by Matthew Bond, allowed me to connect to Anthroposophy through the practical - an experience I had not had before. The wonderful insights provided by Christopher Houghton Budd (from his hotel bathroom in Switzerland!) has inspired further study after the conference. This conversation group reflected the importance of grounding the spiritual in the reality of the world in which we live.

Lauren Vogel



A Poem

Janina Papas

We gather and meet, ponder and greet,
From places both near and far
We came by whatever means we could find
By plane, bus, train, taxi or car.

The morning Lesson is waiting for all
With mantrum of spirit-self proving;
The table of life has been well prepared
Doves in white, through sound, rhythmically moving.

Not many can walk in this wide brown land
From where physical body abides;
In city or farm, small house or large
All over the country-side.

But from those who watch-over, guide or tell
The message is loud and clear,
You are here for one-and-all who know
To overcome doubt, hate and fear.

We know we must cross the rainbow-bridge
For a century has it been told;
The metal Kings showed that what we speak
Is more precious than highly sought gold.

To unlock the door to the knowing of self
You search for the primeval key,
The way to true self, our great teacher has shown
Is through arts, music and poetry.



There are those who our will would seek to disable
By means of doubt, hate and destruction;
The fire, through cleansing our spiritual will,
Was over-come by architectural re-construction.

The Hierarchies, invoked by the foundation stone,
Now urge willingness to faith, hope and power;
Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition our goal
Through hard-working, spirit-self to endower.

Parsival showed us the most vital action
Of lovingly asking 'the question'...
To listen, attend and caringly spend
Time awaiting the other's suggestion.

To value each other beyond all else,
To search, through the other, for truth;
To be brave enough our own thoughts to share
The ageless, the younger, the youth.

We thank all of those who made it come true
Our Conference's 100 year Celebration;
At the Michael Centre together to guide
Our ongoing future-preparation.





The imagination for this Conference arose as a wish to honour the deed of the Christmas Conference, held 100 years ago on the site of the First Goetheanum, destroyed a year before by fire.



Philip Quenby Helen Vogel

Birgith Lugosi

Conference Organisers

Behind the scenes

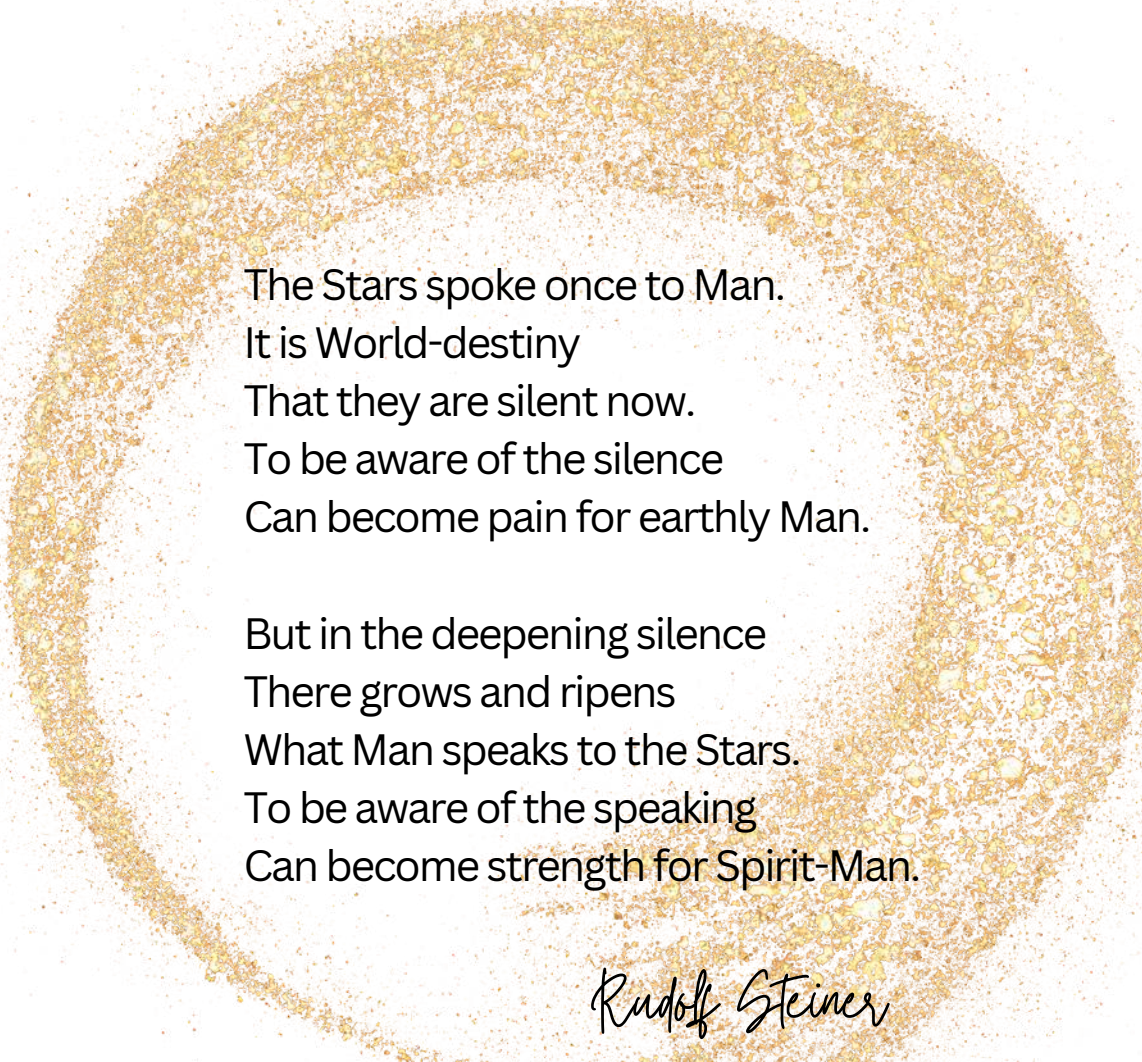


Jane Bradshaw

Jennifer West

The striving behind this conference was to work together to share and explore our understanding of what the Christmas Conference meant for humanity and the Spiritual World in the deepest most esoteric way. Also, to work together to search for ways to continue Anthroposophy now and into the future. Did we achieve this? Yes!

A special thank you to Helen Cock, Pauline Lucas, and Phil Inglemo, who joined the organising committee after generously offering The Michael Centre as a venue to host the 2023 Christmas Conference.



The Stars spoke once to Man.
It is World-destiny
That they are silent now.
To be aware of the silence
Can become pain for earthly Man.

But in the deepening silence
There grows and ripens
What Man speaks to the Stars.
To be aware of the speaking
Can become strength for Spirit-Man.

Rudolf Steiner



The 2023 Christmas Conference, celebrating the 100th anniversary of 'The Christmas Conference' of 1923, was held 27 Dec to 31 Dec at The Michael Centre in Melbourne, Australia.

It was jointly hosted by the Australian Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science in Australia.

Enquiries or requests for distribution/printing should be directed to chair.asina@gmail.com.

Cover artwork by Birgith Lugosi
Photos by Kate West
Design by Lauren Vogel