

## As the year comes to an end...

**In our last newsletter for 2023 we reflect on how the second half of the academic year enriched our students in their Eurythmy education. Here we share some of the stories. Enjoy catching up the on the wonderful happenings at Pacifica...**

After a break following the busy first half of the year, we started the second semester by inviting Tim Dunn, scientist, teacher, creative thinker and insightful anthroposophist to give our students a talk about the Threefold Social Order. Eurythmy is a social art, and we wanted them to begin to explore its relationship to the wider concepts of social life. The talk was provocative and interesting, and was well received by the students.

We were delighted that Dawn Langman could once again share some of her profound understanding of the way Shakespeare developed the characters in his plays and the layers of meaning. Dawn took on a number of roles performing a wide range of

excerpts from different plays, focussing in particular on King Lear, and showed the metamorphosis of the characters throughout the plays as a journey of the spirit. Served by her incredible memory and intense connection with all these works she had the students spellbound. We were all deeply appreciative of her gift.

A third visitor this term was the inventive and engaging speech and drama artist Renate Millonig who lives in Northern NSW. Renate spoke some of her own work and also recited poems by Pablo Neruda. It was so nice for the students to experience yet another approach to creative speech, thank you Renate!

*Tim Dunn stimulating deep thought from the students in the Threefold Social Order workshop..*



## Graduation performances and conference in Newcastle

Students in our senior course, the Beta group, did not all join the training at the same time, so only Micala and Alexander completed their training this year. The others will graduate in June 2024. Together with the whole group Josefin and Jan led the preparation of a program to showcase their work.

Members of the anthroposophical youth movement held a conference in Newcastle Waldorf School early in September to celebrate the inauguration of the Oceania Youth Section. The leader of the international Youth Section, Nathaniel Williams came from the Goetheanum, Switzerland, to be the keynote speaker.

The whole Pacifica team headed south for the weekend.

The Beta students performed their program at the event while the Delta students helped backstage, participated in the conference and got to know other young people from around Australia and New Zealand. The Betas also performed variations of their program for the Newcastle Waldorf School primary school children, high school students and the community. Katrina Stowe who is our new speaker/ narrator gave wonderful introductions to each part of the show which really helped the audiences of all ages connect with what they were seeing.

On returning to Brisbane the Betas gave three more performances to the SVSS students and community in Samford.

*Left: The something performance in Newcastle*

*Below: The cast from the something performance in Newcastle*



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## THE ODYSSEY & MORE...

Term three ended with a lovely shared meal before everyone dispersed for the break, but meanwhile a huge project, The Odyssey, was coming to its culmination next door at the Steiner School, led by drama teacher and visionary, Nicole Ostini. The extravaganza was a two hour-long dramatic adventure traversing the school grounds with the audience in tow, and involving the whole high school, parents, teachers, musicians, puppeteers, former community members- and some Pacifica tutors and students.

*The something ? scene from the Odyssey*

With outstanding sets and props by John Salmond, and new compositions from Dale Jones this was really an amazing project to be involved with. We portrayed the winds and the Shades in Hades through eurythmy.



Immediately afterwards Josefin flew out to begin a new term at the training in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.



During the break, Beta student and Bothmer gymnastics aficionado, Blossom Rubsamen, ran a successful three day Bothmer workshop supported by Pacifica Graduate Brianna Harris who led the eurythmy.

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## FAREWELL Connie Grawert

On a sad note, our dear friend, colleague and eurythmy supporter, Connie Grawert, died at the end of August after a long illness. Josefin and Jan were honoured to be able to offer an excerpt from the Foundation Stone Meditation in front of her coffin at the funeral.

## Term four

Sue Simpson and Patries Orange took charge for term four. With the Beta group they focussed on educational and therapeutic aspects of eurythmy. The students had the chance to observe eurythmy classes at SVSS and elsewhere.

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## New Intake

Our next intake is planned for the mid-year term beginning July 2024.

**We have decided to make this (ie July-September) an 'Open' term meaning not only students intending to complete the training can apply, but anyone else who would like to do eight weeks of eurythmy fulltime. Don't miss the opportunity!**

Please also spread the word to anyone who might be interested in the training.

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## Graduation and farewells

At the end of November, we finished with a wonderful celebration for the two graduates and our senior student Lesley Heap, who began studying with us when she was already over 60, and has now completed four full years, an amazing achievement!

Sally Davison prepared an exquisite lunch for the 45 people attending. The Betas performed, tutors gave brief speeches, then all the students participated in skits and songs giving those departing a hilarious send-off. Congratulations Micala and Alexander

With this second graduation Pacifica successfully completed its 5th year of training.

We are looking forward to a fresh start in 2024, when we will also have an exciting new space to work in once the garage on the property has been converted into a very classy little (second) studio. Photos to follow in the next newsletter!

*A collection of images from our final performance and graduation for 2023. More can be seen in the gallery in the Pacifica website.*



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## Bringing special gifts for humanity

*An interview with Jenny Robertson*

**We'd like to finish this newsletter with two interviews held in recent weeks. Here is the first with Jenny Robertson, one of Pacifica's generous benefactors. Jenny is a retired special education teacher now in her eighties.**



**JBF: Jenny, when did you first encounter Anthroposophy and what role has it played in your life?**

JR: Yes, well I came to Adelaide in 1980 when I was 40. I had a career in education. I travelled a lot and part of that journey led me to Adelaide.

I was at the time updating my education qualifications. I heard of a talk on Steiner education being given as an elective at the teachers college where I was going in Underdale in Adelaide.

I was working in special education interested in different kinds of approaches to working with children, and this came along. The man was Paul Rubens who's been quite a starting point [in anthroposophy] for a few of us in Adelaide. So that was it. I just went to the first talk on Steiner education and found it very attractive. The second week, he was going to speak on the philosophy behind Steiner Education...

That's when I probably first heard the term anthroposophy. And as he outlined it, my whole inner being just said, yes- this is everything that I have carried in myself always unknowingly. Yes- this is it!

**JBF: And it's stayed with you ever since.**

JR: Yes. It has stayed with me ever since. I finished the course, and I met through that the Anthroposophical Society which had rooms in Adelaide. Frank, my husband, and I began going there. I smile when I think about it. Frank and I sitting there all those years ago as real beginners. That really was the start probably about 1983, I think.

And when I found out more about the [importance of the] biographical story I was always intrigued that I was about in my 40s when this just came out of the blue. It became a completely other journey which has been- and still is- continuing in my life.

**JBF: That's wonderful. When did you come across eurythmy?**

JR: I'm not so clear of the beginning but we had eurythmy very often as part of our meetings or festivities with Brian (Cusack\*). It was a form of movement that really spoke to me. The deeper pictures that it carries....

**JBF: You and I have known each other for a while now. We met during my days as General Secretary, (of the Anthroposophical Society)**

**and our conversations have continued as I have become involved with Pacifica. We are very fortunate that you have decided to become a benefactor for Pacifica. Could you say what moved you to make that decision?**

JR: Continuing love of eurythmy starting with the performances I saw here- some wonderful performances with Brian Cusack. Also, I was very fortunate, through Jennifer (West) to find myself in America for the Mystery Dramas (2014) ... It was a gift from the angels for me. [and I saw some wonderful eurythmy there].

**JBF: So out of those experiences you want to support us to continue the work of training eurythmists.**

JR: Yes.

**JBF: In our conversation recently you said that even if you can't travel and do all the things you used to do – and you mentioned birdwatching and canoeing on the lake- the limitations of aging don't take away your love for, and interest in life. What things give you joy these days despite these limitations?**

JR: Rural life, country life, that whole connection with the land, its plants, its creatures, and everything it provides and gives to us. I grew up in a horticultural family on the Murray River, in Mildura, so I've been immersed

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in that sort of world always, and with grandparents on both sides also being mad gardeners. That stays, that horticultural and nature side is still very strong...

The other thing I have a great love of is life story, human life story, in whatever form I come across it. I think that probably sits at the bottom of how I view most things. [Each life] is a wonder, it's a challenge. Living in a rural community (as we still do) the word is community, it's people: people volunteering, people being there for other people in all sorts of ways. That's what makes everything happen! People working in various capacities for each other and developing

these fabulous resources that are in human beings- and are often unknown/ unseen. That's what gives our whole life picture really. I guess that's what lives under [my world view]

I'm just an ordinary person, not terribly active out there. I just have the feeling [that I want] to enable all sorts of wonderful works big and small that I can't physically/ intellectually do [myself], but they are a part of my whole human journey and connection.

It's wonderful to be so far away and still be able to help these wonderful works and their growth continue. this wonderful work and growth [at Pacifica] continue!

I might get to Queensland again, I hope so, but if I am in my little house in Mt Barker knowing there's another group of people doing major wonderful work and producing [graduates] who will work with children, who will work in community, who will bring special gifts for humanity and growth, and I can just give a little bit of what I have been blessed with in my life which is a comfortable living- and more than I particularly need perhaps- to enable you [Pacifica] over there to do those things. That's good for old age!

*Brian Cusack\* was a vibrant, much-loved eurythmist who worked in the Adelaide region until his early death in 2018.*

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## The social art eurythmy

*An interview with Pacifica student, Nimmitybel Parkes*

**Nim is a soccer-playing, whip-cracking, fire-twirling, hospitality whizz who seizes life with both hands and throws herself 150% into everything she does. Nim enrolled in the training just one week before the first term began in 2023.**

**JBF: So, NIM, why did you come to Pacifica?**

NP: I came to Pacifica because I wanted to do something meaningful with my life and no other profession got me excited, but movement did. When I heard Pacifica first opened (2019) my schoolteacher contacted me and I was so excited, almost joined the training but I just didn't feel it was my time yet - now 4 years later here I am and I couldn't be happier.

**JBF: You did eurythmy in school for how long?**

NP: On and off for twelve years

JBF: You chose eurythmy for your year twelve project, and you also went to What Moves You (WMY) \* in Berlin, is that right?

NP: Yes, choosing to do a major in Eurythmy and having the experience of WMY was a big starting ground in my love of eurythmy, and had a huge influence on me wanting to take my training further.

JBF: You're now at the end of your first year of the training. Looking back, what are some reflections on the year?

NP: Looking back there are many, I didn't realize quite how much of a social art eurythmy is, and how

challenging it can be to work in a group, not just within yourself. How much it can impact the group dynamics if you move just for yourself or for the entire group.

It's tough, because you're going so deep within yourself, but you're also trying to care for everyone around you. If you don't, it just doesn't work.

Another reflection is that within Eurythmy, you cannot just learn the piece and go on autopilot, you have to be fully present and take it as a new thing every time.

That's what I've really come into at the end of my first year.

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**JBF: With one year done of a four-year training, how are you feeling?**

NP: I'm so happy to be here and I COULDN'T think of doing anything else. With each challenge I fall deeper in-love with Eurythmy and within myself.

Before entering the training, I would never have seen myself going down the path of becoming a teacher, but now I see how special the gift of Eurythmy is and I'm so thankful for my Eurythmy teacher at school. I would love to one day pass that gift on...

**JBF: If you were talking to your peers, what would you say to them about doing a eurythmy training?**

NP: Everyone wants to do something that helps themselves, especially in this day and age.

Eurythmy is very conscious. It's fun, it's art, it's movement. Really,

it's everything you want, all bundled up!

I truly underestimated the stamina and willpower of eurythmists...if you think that it's all waving your arms about and being gentle, it's not! It's hard, challenging work and will test you in ways you'd never imagined but also hold space for you to grow.

So if you love movement, the world of creative arts or you are just looking for something soul-nourishing, look into Eurythmy - It engages every part of your being and will be the best most rewarding thing in your life!

***What Moves You? is six-week residential eurythmy project for 70+ young people from all over the world. It culminates in 3 performances with a full orchestra in the Komische Oper, Berlin.***



**With many, many thanks to all of you who have supported and followed us in this continuing Pacifica College adventure, we wish you all a Happy Festive Season and a great start to 2024.**

