

Portland Anthroposophic Times

Newsletter of the Portland Branch of Anthroposophical Society in Portland, Oregon

www.portlandbranch.org

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PORTLAND'S MYSTERY DRAMA GROUP

By Diane Rumage,
Vancouver, WA

Our drama group has spent the past year focusing on *The Soul's Probation* by Rudolf Steiner. It is the second Mystery Drama that Rudolf Steiner wrote, performed first in 1911 in Germany.



The series of four dramas brought reincarnation and karma to the stage for the first time, and with what wonderful clarity and

mastery. There were to have been more dramas, but World War I stepped into the pathway. Almost as a clue, when one follows the dramas and the riddles of karma and reincarnation, one is led into the "what if" and the "what then" if even one person in a group is not up to his/her task at a given moment-how it affects each and every one else, even up to the hierophants and the destiny of the world.

As an actor/actress, one is challenged not only by the depth of the material, but also by the necessity to portray spiritual beings or soul forces in a convincing way. Marie Steiner was a renowned actress before meeting Rudolf Steiner. However, she realized that the depth of what was now being presented on the stage required a deepening of the art of speech and drama. She worked together with him to develop the art of Speech Formation and a Dramatic Course that they presented and taught at the Goetheanum from around 1919 - 1924.

She was a strong taskmaster, yet she also supported many of the student's financially in the struggling post-World War I years in Europe.

Our group here in Portland, meeting as it does only 2 evenings a month, cannot begin to approach the level of folks training for many hours a day, working intensely with epic, lyric and dramatic poetry and plays. Yet, over the several years, we can begin to get a feeling of "What is speech? What is the Logos? What different formative qualities are working in the consonants, what soul qualities are emoted in the vowels? How can I as a being created out of the Logos continue the path of conscious creation by working with what is expressed through my warm breath and my larynx with conscious intention?"

Consider the effort and energy we apply to the fact that we sleep, and take great care that we have just the right pillow, the soft sheets, the beautiful covers and just the right firmness of a mattress; or that we eat and take great care in the quality of the growth

MATCHING THE DRAMA GRANT MADE EASIER

The Portland Branch received a challenge to match a \$1,000 gift to support Mystery Drama work through matching grants. The matching donations total \$320, so that leaves us with \$680 to raise before the end of June.

Now it is even easier for you to help raise the \$1000 we need to match a grant that has been offered to the Mystery Drama Group. This matching grant expires at the end of June, so don't hesitate to gift what you can.

James Knight has graciously offered to receive contributions via your credit card.

Please contact James by phone to make your contribution: 503-721-1570.

and preparation and presentation of a meal; or the clothes we buy or make and wear to make us presentable and pleasing to the eye of the beholder. And yet we speak each and every day with our fellow man (at least if we haven't reverted solely to texting like many of the younger generation) and don't give much thought to how we convey our thoughts and feelings and intentions. Yet our voice is one of our most individual characteristics. One can hear if someone is more caught up in their thinking, their feeling, their willing. Perhaps if we have gone to counseling, we may be made aware that the tone of our voice can convey one thing and our words another. If we mumble, we are told to speak up or asked to repeat ourselves. Yet how

much of our speech today is just a fast-food dialogue? Pretty much interrupting each other when they still have a mouthful of words and thoughts? Back and forth, rat-a-tat-tat.

Even if one has acted before, the enormously long monologues and responses in the dramas (one of Capesius' lasts for 4 1/2 pages) can be a challenge, for both the audience and the actor. Let's face it. Most of us don't follow our own thoughts on a particular subject for more than a minute or two (unless we have dutifully practiced the thought exercise from the *Six Basic Exercises* given by Steiner). The Age of Rapid (or is it Rabid?) and Vapid Technology gives to and demands from us fast and faster and fastest responses. And yet the characters in the dramas, just like us as individuals, each require their own way of speaking. One speaks with more vowels, one with more consonants. One emphasizes certain consonants, which in turn convey something different. To live into each character, what they are struggling through not just in the immediate interaction with others, but in digesting the new thoughts they hear, the sympathies and antipathies they experience, the viewing of past lives and how that affects each of them differently, this is a challenge that takes a long time to live into. First, one must understand each character through repeated reading and study, and then acquire the ability to express that out of oneself to convey that to an audience. And the magic of speech, and indeed it is a sort of magic, is that just hearing the speech can convey what the other is feeling, thinking and intending, even if it were pure gobbledygook. Let's say I uttered the phrase "melting splitter splattered banana barrels" to someone. They might want to find a meaning in the phrase by thinking about it, which is fine. But I could convey so much just by emphasizing the "m" and the sympathetic merging that expresses, followed by the "l's" and the liquid transformative activity it describes, followed by the "p's" and "t's" that explode out with force, and the "b's" expressing that which was contained and protected, being acted upon with such force. So might a eurhythmist or speech formation artist look at that phrase. In addition, by expressing it with the right emphasis, they can convey that experience to another, whether the other understands English or not. In a sense, we

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PORTLAND BRANCH OF THE ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, PLEASE CALL DIANE RUMAGE AT (360) 241-7854.

THE PORTLAND BRANCH THANKS THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS AND FRIENDS FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATIONS IN 2010!

James Knight	Diane Rowley	Kathryn Foubister
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The *Portland Anthroposophic Times* is published twelve times a year by the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society in America to serve members and friends in the wider anthroposophical community. Printed copies of the newsletter are available at the Takacs Clinic, Portland Waldorf School, Cedarwood Waldorf School, Shining Star and Swallowtail School. The newsletter and calendar are also posted on the Portland Branch website at www.portlandbranch.org.

Questions, suggestions and submissions may be sent by e-mail to anthroposophy@earthlink.net. Items selected for publication in the Portland Anthroposophic Times may be edited for style, content and length. The deadline for submissions to the *Portland Anthroposophic Times* is the first day of each month for publication in that month's edition. Submit calendar items to branchcalendar@mindspring.com no later than the first of each month for publication in the next edition.

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re-learn the alphabet through repeated nonsense speech exercises, specifically geared to free the speech from the confines of thought or our own temperament. In turn, such work actually works back on our own etheric and astral body. We acquire the ability to be aware of the formative, the dynamic forces, and also gain more control over them. And what is reincarnation about? Don't we learn to hone our character and change from creature to creator, with lots of help along the way from others?

The Soul's Probation mainly follows Capesius, an older history professor, through his awakening to his soul forces and then to an imaginative retrospect of his life during the Middle Ages, at the time of the destruction of the Knights Templar. Each drama has a seal. This drama's seal has a central pentagram with sharp angular lines surrounded by 2 sets of different wavy lines in the middle and periphery, giving an impression of a metamorphoses and inversion of the pentagram, and pointing to the process of reincarnation. Capesius' experience is triggered by his re-reading for the umpteenth time some words by Benedictus, his spiritual mentor. Even so, in reading and rereading and working with these dramas--each time something new is revealed and takes each of us a bit further along the path. The retrospect into the 14th century is also imaginatively seen by Maria and Johannes Thomasius, friends of Capesius. Only then, we see Capesius as a Templar Knight, who has abandoned his family to pursue his spiritual striving in the brotherhood of the knights, and Maria is a Catholic Monk, with Johannes her devoted lay friend and Catholic adherent. Johannes has the quandary of working as a miner for the knights who have developed the land that the Church long left fallow. He has longed to meet his father, and when he finally does, discovers he is on the "opposing side", and chooses his belief in Catholicism over his blood tie to his father. He also initially falls in love unwittingly with his sister, (from whom he was separated after Capesius of the Middle Ages left them), intending to marry her.

This same sister is someone who now in the present time, as Theodora, is married to someone else, but for whom Johannes still feels passionate about, allowing past incarnation blood ties of the siblings to play over wrongly into the present.

All three of these characters, Capesius, Maria and Johannes, react and are able to digest this knowledge differently. Maria consciously acknowledges the challenges and debts she needs to work on in this incarnation. Capesius is as if enchanted into the past life, and cannot properly regain his footing in this incarnation for a time. Johannes prefers dwelling in the "in-between-zone" of the spiritual world, and is not comfortable elsewhere for a time. We see a fourth character, Strader, who does not consciously view this retrospect. In the final scene he enters the Sun

Temple asleep, led in by soul forces. Yet his is a task that seems out of sync with many of his contemporaries, and yet both in the Middle Ages and now his fellow men await benefit from his work. His work is of the future. We learn quickly how not to judge the seeming real to be true. We especially experience how each one plays into and affects the lives and

***The Mystery Drama
Group has openings for
all who are interested in
drama and speech
work.***

destinies of others, far into the future. How some of us follow one type of spiritual being or another more easily, how some have healthier soul forces and others have more hindering ones. In spite of their struggles and setbacks, it can actually be consoling as we acknowledge that each of us fails repeatedly no matter how hard we strive. Moreover, it can be an urge to right action, speech and thought as we see how strongly we can help or hinder the other on their path, and the common goal of humankind.

Our drama group will be presenting Scene V of *The Soul's Probation* in February 2011 here in Portland as part of the celebration of Rudolf Steiner's 150th birthday. We hope you will attend.

We also hope you will donate, no matter how much or how little, to help match the grant intended to

support our dramatic presentations with costumes, props, lighting, and backdrops. (Our actual work is all-volunteer). If you would like to donate to the Portland Mystery Drama Group to help match the \$1000 grant (\$320 already generously given), please make out your check to the Portland Branch of the Anthroposophical Society and write Mystery Dramas in the memo line of the check itself. Mail it to the Portland Branch c/o Ruth Klein, 3609 SE Center, Portland, OR 97202. You can speak with Ruth at 503 777-3176. James Knight has the possibility of accepting credit card payments, and has kindly offered to do so on behalf of the Branch for the drama presentations. Please call him if interested at 503 721-1570.

In addition, there is an ongoing invitation to take part in our group, which meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. in SW Portland. Let me know if you'd like to check us out. 360 241-7854. drumage@earthlink.net.

Comments from members of the group:

Bob Kellum I had no idea what a therapeutic and developmental experience it would be to engage in a path of elocution and dramatic exploration. I got involved in it years ago, partly as a lark in the path of friends, most especially Diane, who had the interest and initiative, which my wife Donna and I consequently explored with her. Diane has been a wise and wonderful friend and mentor on this path. When I first met her and heard her speak, I was captured by what she was about. She seemed an authentic person; why did she speak in the dramatic way that she did? Isn't drama just something you experience on stage? It was only through the practice of regular elocution that I began to appreciate the eurythmy of language and the control and clarity in my life that meditating upon it had to offer. This is a lifetime project. I am just beginning, but I can see the rewards sufficiently now to know its value. It is not something I could



have grasped intellectually. I would not have known this without experiencing it first hand. Likewise, performing the Mystery Dramas has been a constant challenge and revelation as well. I remember somewhere that Steiner referred to it as among his most important works--where everything comes together. The first time I read through the four plays I had very little idea what the hell I was reading. As we have begun to live into the characters, however, through them I find myself increasingly more deeply immersed in the everyday struggle between Lucifer and Ahriman that each of us experiences moment to moment as a necessary corollary of spiritual evolution. What a breath of fresh air to have a medium in which this reality can be honestly affirmed and brought to light. Our evenings together are often punctuated by interesting discussions arising out of the scenes, and the elocutionary exploration of the wonderful poems of Arvia MacKaye Ege, and many others, are equally inspiring. We are a small group, and people within it have been nurturing an environment of comfort and security that has been allowing all of us to open up and grow. I am grateful for that, and hopeful that we can continue in this development, even as there are times when I miss meetings, and even as the thought of memorizing long parts and still having a life can be challenging. Join us. Soon you'll be talking strangely too.

Wes Burch I just dived in last Fall; I did not know anything about the Mystery Dramas. I think I will have to go thru the four dramas at least twice to get some understanding going of the characters. I like the speech exercises the best: standing and speaking and getting surprised by the phrases. I liked being in the play. I really wish I had not lost my voice. I look forward to another year in the fall and being part of the next production. Thank you for leading us.

Donna Patterson I can only say that our drama practice is expanding my self-knowledge and my self-confidence in a social sense. Even as understanding and remembering the script is a challenge in itself, my enthusiasm keeps growing, for studying the scenes before we meet. An inner liveliness towards the others in our group is also growing, simply by way of our sharing this

together. Certainly, I feel gratitude and sometimes I even feel happiness that we are doing this. It really is a mystery how our drama study is working inside me.

Summer Arnett Studying the Mystery Dramas has affected me in several ways. It has deepened my study and understanding of Anthroposophy. I have had several heartfelt moments of realization about karma, eurythmy, and various other subjects. By reading and voicing and moving with the plays, I have obtained a sense of how people work through their karma and how that relationship with others brings them to new developments in their spirituality. It has deepened my sense of self through the voice work we do as a group and through being able to relate to characters. It has kept a light in my heart for performing and understanding the human condition through the reading. It has developed a rhythm in my life that I love. Diane Ramage leads our group and for me brings openness, sincerity, playfulness, humor, and knowledge. I am very grateful for her and the others in our group that continue to carry the space for our work with the dramas.

Tish Johnson Steiner's words literally take on human form when our drama group speaks the parts of the soulful beings who are karmically connected in his Mystery Plays. Each member of the group contributes to my experience with the soul forces that lie within the pages of the four plays. Diane's knowledge, guidance and facility with speech elocution as well as the lively humor that "infects" our group have made our Wednesday night gatherings a joyful escapade.

E-mail Diane if you are interested in trying out for the Mystery Drama Group.

drumage@earthlink.net

Portland Anthroposophical Society Calendar - June 2010

Ongoing Events and Study Groups

Anthroposophical Course for Young Doctors Study Group

Once a month on the 1st Wednesday at the Pohala Clinic, 12050 SE Holgate Blvd. 7-8:30 PM. Contact Julie Foster by phone at (503) 572-4196 or by e-mail at julie@pohalaclinic.com.

Karma Exercises and Study

The study group has just completed its multi-year work with the entire *Karmic Relationships* lecture cycle, and is now starting to work with Rudolf Steiner's karma exercises on the first and third Thursday of each month. Call James Lee for information 503 249-3804 or e-mail him at anthroposophy@earthlink.net.

Mystery Dramas, with Speech-Formation Exercises

On the second and fourth Wednesdays each month, 7:30 - 9:00 PM, in SW Portland. Currently working on the 2nd *Mystery Drama* by Rudolf Steiner, *The Soul's Probation*. No acting experience necessary, just a love of the Word. Contact Diane Ramage by e-mail at drumage@earthlink.net or by phone at 360 241-7854 for information.

Occult Science

First and third Tuesdays from 7:30 - 9:00 PM at 3046 NE 33rd Avenue, Portland, OR 97212. Contact Donna Patterson and Bob Kellum at 503-331-7393.

Portland Waldorf School Community Choir

Every Friday morning from 8:45 - 10:15 am (at the Portland Waldorf School, 2300 SE Harrison Street, Milwaukie) in the Orchard room, whenever school is in session. Anyone in- and outside the PWS community who enjoys singing songs through the seasons, across the centuries and around the world is very welcome, including drop ins. This event is free and a community builder. More information: Marion Van Namen (503) 956-4046.

Portland Youth Discussion Group

We invite you to join some of the young, and young-at-heart, members of our community for an ongoing potluck/study group. We are considering working with *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, to renew our understanding of this key work (other possibilities exist). We welcome new people who are open to exploring spiritual science, asking questions, discussing topics that sometimes get overlooked in other groups, and trying to keep Anthroposophy as fresh, relevant, and living as possible. We meet Sunday evenings, twice a month to share a potluck dinner, practical/artistic activity, and conversation. For more information, please contact Angelica Hesse at 503-238-0055 or swingsprite@gmail.com.

Spiritual Psychology Study Group

Working with the Steiner text, *Psychology of Body, Soul and Spirit*, we meet the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM. Call Cheri Munske for more info: 503-484-4133.

Waldorf Education and Teacher Training

Lectures and courses conducted throughout the year by the Micha-el Institute. Contact John Miles at 503/774-4946. johncmiles@usa.net.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, JUNE 13

First Class of the School of Spiritual Science

Bothmer Hall, Blue card required - Discussion on Lesson 3 at 8:30 AM, class at 9:30 AM sharp. Lesson 4. Please contact Diane Ramage at (360) 241-7854.

JUNE 21 - JULY 2

Micha-el Institute - Summer Conferences

Early Childhood Intensive Conference: "Health - Laying a Foundation for Life"

See website for details, www.Micha-elInstitute.com, held at the Micha-el School, 5239 SE Woodstock Blvd, Portland OR 97206 Contact 503 774-4946 or email johncmiles@usa.net.

JUNE 25-26**Tycho Brahe, Herzeleide and Emperor Julian**

A " karma exercise" workshop at Rudolf Steiner Community Center, Martin Alley, Pasadena, CA 91105. Presenters will be Linda Connell, Jannebeth Röell, MariJo Rogers and Lynn Stull. Contact Linda Connell linconnell@sbcglobal.net
[http://www.anthroposophy.org/index.php?id=62&tx_ttnews\[pointer\]=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=178&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=39&cHash=549fc4ebbcc209055c616e4f97133a77](http://www.anthroposophy.org/index.php?id=62&tx_ttnews[pointer]=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=178&tx_ttnews[backPid]=39&cHash=549fc4ebbcc209055c616e4f97133a77)

JUNE 25-27**The Zodiac and World Evolution in the Light of Divine Sophia**

Eurythmy as Cosmic and Sacred Dance, creating a pathway to Community, Spirit and Healing, presented by Robert Powell, PhD. Huckleberry Hall, Seattle Waldorf School, 2728 NE 100th Street. Suggested donation: \$170/ \$190. To register send \$50 deposit, payable to Seattle Branch, to: Katherine Hitchcock, 2442 NW Market St #108, Seattle, WA 98107.

Sunday, JULY 11**First Class of the School of Spiritual Science**

Bothmer Hall, Blue card required - Discussion on Lesson 4 at 8:30 AM, class at 9:30 AM sharp. Lesson 5. Please contact Diane Ramage at (360) 241-7854. Next class September 12, 2010

Sunday JULY 11**Transformation and Alchemy**

This quarterly meeting for members and friends invited Seth Miller to talk about some key features of this ongoing work. Seth Miller has taught physics and other high school subjects in Waldorf Schools across the West. His Master's thesis, inspired by Dennis Klocek's Consciousness Studies program, examined the four elements of Earth, Water, Air, and Fire as the basis for a qualitatively rich way of working with transformative patterns. As a continuation of this work, he is currently swimming in a pile of books related to his PhD dissertation from the California Institute of Integral Studies, which focuses on the

topic of transformation through the lenses of anthroposophy, alchemy and cybernetic epistemology. Bothmer Hall ,11:00 AM potluck 11:30AM-1PM talk and activity.

JULY 11-24**Micha-el Institute - Summer Conferences**

Waldorf teacher training Intensives includes External Grades Certificate Course; Class Teacher Deepening Conference for Grade 1; Class Teacher Deepening Conference for Grade 4; Class Teacher Deepening Conference for Grade 5; and Class Teacher Deepening Conference for Grade 7; See website for details, www.Micha-elInstitute.com , held at the Micha-el School, 5239 SE Woodstock Blvd, Portland OR 97206. Contact 503 774-4946 or email johncmiles@usa.net.

JULY 12-23**Changing Times- Changing Music**

The new music and it's natural place in Waldorf pedagogy with Manfred Bleffert from Germany. <http://waldorfmusic.org>

Tuesday, JULY 13**Portland Branch Council Meeting**

7 PM - 8PM study of the theme of the year followed by a business meeting at the home of Ruth and Tom Klein, 3609 SE Center, Portland OR 97202, phone: 503-777-3176. All Branch members are welcome to attend.

AUGUST 26-**Micha-el Institute - Summer Conferences**

Foundation Conference: See website for details, www.Micha-elInstitute.com , held at the Micha-el School, 5239 SE Woodstock Blvd, Portland OR 97206. Contact 503 774-4946 or email johncmiles@usa.net.

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