

A few remarks on the history of the eurhythmics method in Poland.

Teachers-creators important for popularization and development eurhythmics method in Poland - some examples

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The following text is only an introduction to the research on history and development of the eurhythmics method in Poland. I mention only a few people here and I describe them briefly, just to give you an idea of the popularity of this method in Poland at the time of the development of the Emil-Jaques Dalcroze Institute in Hellerau. I focus on people working creatively with the body movement who have contributed to the development of plastique animee but also created dance and musical theatre. I am not writing here about all these people - I mention only a few selected examples.

I.

Some of Polish students of E.Jaques-Dalcroze Institute in Hellerau

- Stanisław Głowacki
- Stefan Wysocki
- Adolfina Paszkowska
- Flora Szczepanowska
- Zofia Świątkowska
- Stanisław Wiechowicz
- Jareccy Brothers
- Kazimierz Kleczyński
- Elżbieta Willman
- Jadwiga Zarzycka
- Maria Rambert
- Janina Mieczyska

Photo: Flora Szczepanowska i Zofia Świątkowska, Hellerau 1911

<https://www.lwow.home.pl/swiatkowska/zofia11.jpg>

Several key personalities from this group of eurhythmics precursors in Poland were educated simultaneously in music (for example, eurhythmics) and dance and worked in both professions, as eurhythmics teachers and dancers. They contributed to the development of plastique animee (e.g. S.Głowacki, A.Paszkowska, M.Rambert, J.Mieczyska ect). But there is also a group of composers, conductors and music theoreticians who went to Hellerau to explore the secrets of solfeggio and music pedagogy (e.g. S. Wysocki, St. Wiechowicz).

II.

High popularity of private eurhythmics schools before II WW

In Poland until 1939 eurhythmics has been taught at a few of well-known private schools e.g.:

- Stanisław Głowacki (1908 Lwów)
- Adolfina Paszkowska and Franciszka Kutnerówna (1904 Lwów - School of Mim and later Mim and Eurhythmics Plastique, 1919 Warsaw)
- Flora Szczepanowska and Zofia Świątkowska (1911 Lwów)
- Janina Mieczysłowska (1912 Warsaw),
- Tacjana and Stefan Wysoccy, (1918 Warsaw)
- Walentyna Wiechowiczowa (Poznań)
- Irena Prusicka (Warsaw)

III.

Eurhythmics as the Method Supporting the Artistic Development on the example of four chosen teachers

1. Janina Mieczysłowska (born Warsaw 26.11. 1888 - died Warsaw 29.11.1981)

dancer, choreographer, educationalist

Studies:

- drawing and painting (2 years)
- Institute of E. Jaques-Dalcroze in Hellerau
- 1915-18 plastic dance at the Szor Music Institute in Moscow

Educational work:

- 1912 founded a private School of Eurhythmics and Plastique transformed officially into a department (branch) of the Institute of E. Jaques-Dalcroze in 1913.
- between 1918-1939 the school worked as the School of Eurhythmics and Artistic Dance and also taught the style of Isadora Duncan
- between 1921-32 she taught eurhythmics in Drama Department of Warsaw Conservatory
- between 1932-39 she taught eurhythmics and plastique at National Institute of Theatre Art
- between 1946-1963 she taught at Drama School in Warsaw and Academy of Music in Warsaw

Photo: Janina Mieczysłowska <https://encyklopediateatru.pl/osoby/7127/janina-mieczynska>

Photos: At private School of Eurhythmics and Plastique <https://audiovis.nac.gov.pl/obraz/108824/>

Artistic work:

- her dance company received the prize during International Competition in Vienna (1934)
- between 1943-44 worked as a choreographer for „Tajny Theater Wojskowy“ („Secret Military Theatre“)
- after the Second World War cooperated with theatres in Łódź:

- „Teatre Wojska Polskiego“ („Polish Army Theatre“ 1946/47),
- „Stefan Jaracz Theatre“ (1949/50),
- „Powszechny Theatre“ („Common Theatre“ 1953/54, 1980),
- „Młodego Widza Theatre“ („Young Soectator Theatre“ 1954, 1958, 1959),
- „Nowy Theatre“ („New Theatre“ 1955/56),
- „Rozmaitości Theatre“ („Variety Theatre“ 1960)

Photos: Janina Mieczyska's Dance Company

<https://audiovis.nac.gov.pl/obraz/154315/>

Her students:

- 1) Dancers - pre-World War II graduates of her private School of Eurhythmics and Plastique (e.g.: Irena Prusicka, Ziuta Buczyńska, Halina Hulanicka, Pola Nireńska)
- 2) Actors - graduates of the Academy of Theater in Warsaw and the Academy of Film in Łódź
- 3) Musicians:
 - a. eurhythmics teachers: Jadwiga Grafczyńska, Janina Batawia, Maria Wieman, Maria Cukierówna, Wanda Mieczyska-Rogowska (pre-war period)
 - b. and post-war graduates of Eurhythmics Specialty at the Academy of Music in Łódź and the Academy of Music in Warsaw (e.g. Barbara Bernacka, Józefa Lenartowska, Bogumiła Targosz, Hanna Bielecka, Ewa Nowak)

Ewa Nowak - (graduate of AM in Łódź in 1964), my former teacher, who in 1989 established the Eurhythmics Specialty at The Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, Poland. Earlier, she established and ran (1967-2007) the Department of Eurhythmics at the K.Szymanowski State High School of Music in Katowice. Her graduates are over 150 people: Iwona Mida, Joanna Polachowska, Barbara Dutkiewicz, Anetta Pasternak, Anna Lipiec, Monika Kionka, Aleksandra Rzepka, Iga Eckert.



Photo: Ewa Nowak (private collection)

2. Tacjana Wysocka (born Moscow 31.01.1894 – died Warsaw 2.04.1970)

dancer, choreographer, ballet manager and theorist, educationalist. Wife of Stefan Wysocki (1886–1940) who was a Polish musician, studied in Hellerau and developed his own method of ear training teaching.

Studies:

- since 1908 learnt classical ballet with E. Sokołowa
- between 1909-11 took eurhythmics lesson with W. Presniakov
- since 1911 attended Institute of Eurhythmical Gymnastics (Eurhythmic) in S.Petersburg using the method of E.Jaques-Dalcroze
- learnt dance with W.Fokin and J.Krzysiński, acting with S.Wołkoński.
- She also studied history of art
- since 1913 performed as a dancer during solo dance recitals
- in 1915 received a diploma of Institute of Eurhythmical Gymnastics (Eurhythmic) and became a teacher

Educational work:

- before the October Revolution, she ran her own School of Eurhythmics and Stage Dance in S.Petersburg
- after the outbreak of the Revolution she moved with her husband to Warsaw where in 1918 they founded the Tacjana and Stefan Wysocky School of Musicality (1936 School of Stage Dance)
- between 1923-25 she ran eurhythmics and plastique classes in Institute Reduta
- between 1934-39 she ran movement classes at The Directing Department in National Institute of Theatre Art in Warsaw

Artistic work:

1) Before War

- In connection to her dance school she also founded the Company of Dance Art (Teatr Sztuki Tanecznej) where she performed as a soloist
- revue repertoire was presented by company Tacjann-girls.
- More ambitious choreographies with classical music (Schumann, Liszt, Chopin, Jan Adam Maklakiewicz, Haendel) were called Tacjana Wysocka Ballet.
- This company performed also abroad, particularly respected in Paris for performance "Images polonaises". Wysocka ballet with Leon Schiller libretto was presented during International Dance Competition.
- Between 1935-38 the company performed also in Belgium, Italy, Germany, France (in 1937 in Casino de Paris)
- between 1928-39 her company performed in Cabaret „Qui Pro Quo“ but also in the cinema, incl. 1938 „Strachy“ (,Fears') 1938.

2) After War

- 1945-46 she worked as a balletmaster in the City Theatre in Częstochowa
- 1947-48 - choreographer in Stanisław Wyspiański Theatre in Katowice – „Antigone“ 1947, „Krakowiacy i Górale“ 1947, „A Midsummer Night's Dream“ 1947, „As you like it“ 1948. Taught in Drama Studio located in the theatre in Katowice
- 1946-51 she found and ran School of Stage Dance, later turned into Ballet School in Sosnowiec, later in Bytom. It is the oldest institution of this type in Poland. After nationalization in 1951 Wysocka was an artistic manager there.
- in 1952 she came back to Warsaw and taught artistic gymnastics at Academy of Physical Education

- at the end of her life she focused on journalism concerning history and critique of dance
- in 1968, the Université de la Danse in Paris awarded her an honorary doctorate.

3. Adolfina Paszkowska (born Saint Petersburg 5.06.1884 – died Warsaw 7.04.1968)

dancer, director

Studies:

- between 1901-1904 Institute of E.Jaques-Dalcroze in Hellerau

Educational work:

- from 1904 she ran School of Mime-Plastique in Kiev

Artistic work:

1) Before War

- performed with her own recitals as a dancer
- received the first prize in cinematographic competition in Odessa
- debuted on the stage of the Polish Theatre with her own recital 7 March, 1920
- between 1936-1939 she lived in Gdynia where she taught eurhythmics and opera plastique in Gdynia Conservatory
- directed (for the first time together with K.Wiłkomirski) fragments of the opera 'The Queen of Spades' (1937) and 'Boris Godunov' (1939)

About Adolfina Paszkowska

„She was a talented dancer gifted in good conditions and acting abilities. Her choreographies are characterized by great musicality and skillful emphasizing dramaturgy of every work. As a director she could also make her singers act well. She cared about the whole performance with precision and creativeness but she was always in agreement with the character of music.“

2) After War

- between 1945-47 lived in Łódź and taught opera directing class at The High School of Music
- between 1947-58 lived in Wrocław where she worked full-time as a director in „Lower Silesia Opera” and prepared eg. 'The Marriage of Figaro' (1948)

4. Marcela Hildebrandt-Pruska (born in Chicago 22.09.1905 - died 25.09.2007 Santa Lucia Island, the Caribbean)

dancer, choreographer, educationist

Studies:

- as a child she studied the violin
- later in Poznań private School of Dance and Eurhythmics by Walentyna Wiechowiczowa (a student of E.Jaques-Dalcroze, a graduate of Institute in Hellerau)
- 1929-30 – in Austria, School of Dance Hellerau-Laxenburg near Vienna where she learnt the method of Rosalia Chladek

Educational work:

1) After War

- she opened her private School of Eurhythmics and Plastique Movement in her flat (10, Roosevelt Street, Poznań)

The nationalization

- in 1950 the school was nationalized and turned into National Centre of Choreography and later Public Centre of Ballet. She was in charge of it until 1968.
- between 1950-82 eurhythmics teacher in many national institutions: Secondary Music School (eurhythmics), The Studio of Drama (eurhythmics and acting), The Olga Sławska-Lipczyńska Ballet School in Poznań (eurhythmics), The State School of Amateur Theater Instructors, The Opera School at Academy of Music in Poznań
- in 1968 started again to give private lessons in her flat (10, Roosevelt Street in Poznań) and created The Plastique of Movement Company there

Artistic work:

1) Before War

- 5 December, 1931 debut in a solo recital in Schumann-Saal in Berlin and a few days later with the same recital in Poznań. She performed with the piano accompaniment by Roman Maciejewski. The programme included: Bach, Scarlatti, Chopin, Debussy, Prokofiev, Scriabin and Rachmaninov
- concerts all over Poland and in France (Paris). She took part in International Competitions of Artistic Dance
- performed in cabaret „Cactus“ with her plastic dances

2) After War

- She founded the Dance Company as a part of the Centre of Choreography which was a part of Studio of Early Music and Dance (functioning between 1953-54) – her ‚Polish Renaissance Dances‘ were performed there
- cooperated with many theaters and Poznań TV and created choreographies for programs concerning music, theatre and dance (1957-1974).

Her students about Marcela Hildebrandt-Pruska:

- *„the first sign of modern ballet. Her opinions differ from the classic and conservative understanding of ballet. She explained the rules of limitations of movement and opened our eyes to a different understanding and interpreting. She helped us to listen to many composers, often quite unknown and focus on their musical structures. She had a great influence on us“.* (Konrad Drzewiecki)
- *“we didn’t use to get ready ideas from her (as from other choreographers); she provoked us into our own search; music, stage design, stage acting – those elements inspired our bodies to improvise with plastique and movement. She, as a wizard, could create beautifully composed ‘dancing paintings’.”* (Juliusz Standa)

Her students:

1) eurhythmics teachers e.g:

- **Monika Skazińska** - established eurhythmics Specialty at the Academy of Music in Poznań. She also developed the rules of artistic after-graduate promotion in the field of eurhythmics method and was the first person in Poland to achieve Docent degree in the artistic discipline of eurhythmics and dance (1985).

- **Teresa Nowak** - musician, choreographer, educator
 - for 30 years ran eurhythmics classes and movement plastique in F. Chopin State School of Music in Poznań and Olga Slawska-Lipczyńska Ballet School in Poznań
 - 1993-96 Polish Radio (channel 2) broadcasted her programme: „Taka sobie muzyczka, taka sobie muzyka“ („such little music, such music“)
 - organized „Castle Music Salons“ (Centre of Culture in Poznań) – interdisciplinary concerts with dance (including plastique dance), music, multimedia
 - artistic manager of Plastique Movement Group (founded in 1977) presenting choreographies and improvisations with music, plastique and literature (also in Hellerau).

2) dancers e.g:

- **Konrad Drzewiecki**, graduate of the State Ballet School in Poznań. Founder and director, choreographer of Polish Dance Theater in Poznań)
- **Rogeryk Lange** – (born Bydgoszcz 5.10.1930 – died Saint Helier, Jersey 16.03.2017) polish ethnologist, dance anthropologist, choreologist. In 2016, the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Studies:

- dance (since 1946) at Urszula Gryglewska's school in Bydgoszcz
- 1952-54 a member of the Marcelli Hildebrandt-Prussian ensemble at the Poznań Philharmonics
- 1959 study on the analysis of motion and dance notation (Laban system) at the Folkwang Hochschule in Essen, Germany

Working activity:

- 1958-1967 - lectures on kinetography and ethnology of dance in Pedagogical Dance Studies (CPARA) in Warsaw
- 1967-1972 he worked abroad as a senior lecturer at the Laban Art of Movement Center in Addlestone
- 1971-2013 founder and director of the Center for Dance Studies in Jersey
- 1976-1996 editor of the periodical "Dance Studies"

These individuals exerted a tremendous impact on both the shape of the eurhythmics method in Poland and on the development of contemporary dance and ballet. The dance education system in Poland incorporated eurhythmics classes as an obligatory subject.



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