



Stage of "Tomte Tummetott", performed by Ensemble Notenkonzert

The Art of Performing

by

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When I was studying music, I was confronted with having to play for an audience. Literally: confronted. After years of experience in studying music and performing, now I remember that my practicing was an activity different to the one of playing on stage. I practiced the music, the pieces, the repertoire...all what I needed to prepare for my clarinet and piano lessons, auditions, exams... How to be in front of an audience was not part of my daily practice and only by playing for an audience, I managed slowly not to be influenced by nervousness at the moment of performing.

Years of playing in different ensembles, collaborating with orchestras, creating own music concepts (Musikusvie, Dynamische Stimme, Singende Blätter, sound in movement ...), performing through Europe in theaters and concert halls (Paris, Amsterdam, Regensburg, Valencia, London, Budapest, Stuttgart, Köln, Brussels, Bilbao, Aalborg ...) the following question came to me: "what if all the musicians with whom I am playing *now* would have a basic knowledge of the Alexander Technique?"

Other questions followed concerning topics like "spacial awareness", "dynamic attitude", "articulation", "sounding rest", "the rhythm coming on stage", "the harmony on stage", "the individual and collective rest" (or silence), "leaving the stage", "Nachklang", "playing through instead of playing against", "accepting the situation making contact with the acoustic", "receiving the sound", "giving the sound", "back space", "absorbing the weight of the instrument"...these were all thoughts, that I started to use in my practicing as I was winning experience as an Alexander Technique teacher. Practicing and performing accompanied by these new ideas brought me to the conclusion that the work developed by F.M.Alexander (1869 - 1955) does not make you a better player instead allows you being you on stage. And by "being you on stage, you make yourself a better player".

One fundamental aspect of the Alexander Technique is the importance to take individual lessons bringing in a long term a direct individual benefit to the player. But a player is also playing with others. Back to my question "what if all the musicians with whom I am playing *now* would have a basic knowledge in the Alexander Technique?", I started to develop a workshop form to teach ensembles the potential of the Alexander Technique in ensemble playing under the name: *The Art of Performing*.

In 2011 playing with "Rosa Ensemble" for the production of Opera Spanga "Falstaff Rivisto" I gave a few individual lessons and space awareness group sessions before the performances. This was a first attempt in researching how to introduce to an ensemble the Alexander Technique. Later on I could continue with my research with Insonmio Ensemble during the production of "The Yellow Shark" (2019) giving short individual lessons in collaboration with Equilibrium (an Alexander Technique studio based in Utrecht) during the

rehearsal breaks. In these first presentations of *The Art of Performing* I was as well performing on the clarinet, bassclarinet and contra bassclarinet.

Writing about my first experiences for bringing further my work to other music institutions, I came to the necessity of pointing out that *The Art of Performing* is not about chamber music lessons because it does not teach either the content of the piece neither the interpretation of it (there are specialists for that), instead teaches how to link up between the players on basis of the *Alexander Technique* going beyond the individual knowledge and individual benefit which an individual *Alexander Technique* session would provide.

For playing in an ensemble it is necessary to be individually prepared and to acquire a technique that enables the musician to control the instrument. For *The Art of Performing* it is equally necessary that every player of the ensemble has individual lessons in the Alexander Technique as well as to learn about self observation within the group, to win agility in reacting to possible mistakes while performing, to gain experience with the meaning of “stage togetherness”, to play through oneself ...

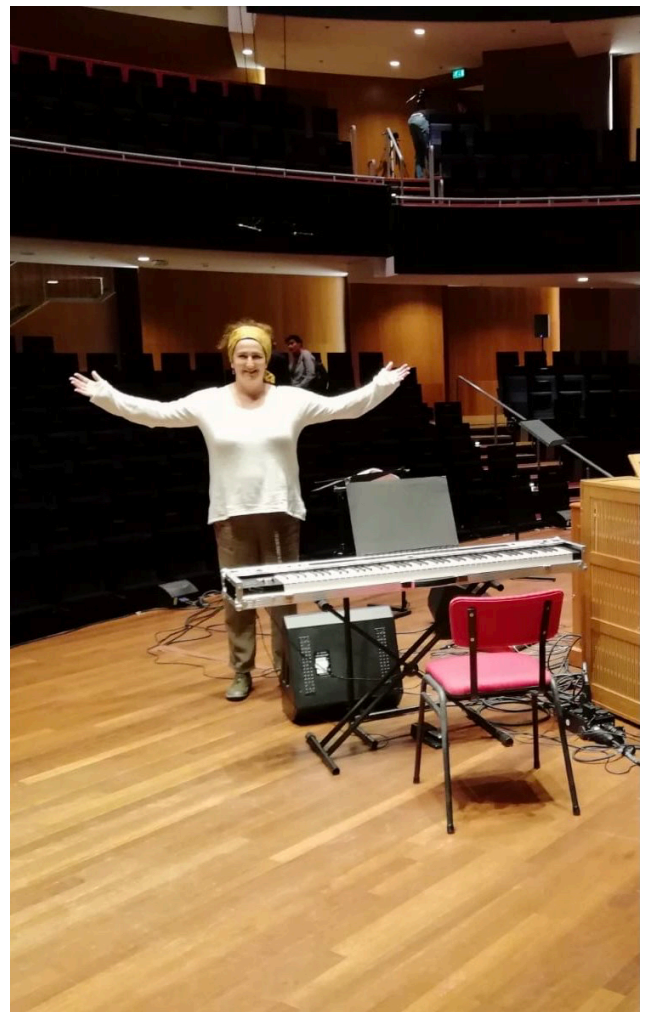
The Art of Performing is the research of BEING together on stage, the art of being on stage. After all, musicians need from each other to play together, sharing with other musicians, for example, the acoustic, more or less space on stage (physical distance), a new lighting and other unfamiliar circumstances than the ones of the rehearsal space. And there is little time for adapting which often brings an unsatisfactory result to the performance.

Further than to play together, there is a being together on stage that can be learned, educated and brought into practice building a link between the players, a link that will be used as a common connector.

The difference in what we see and hear lies in how we think.



Workshop in Kallmünz (D) 2019



Concert in Utrecht (NL) 2019