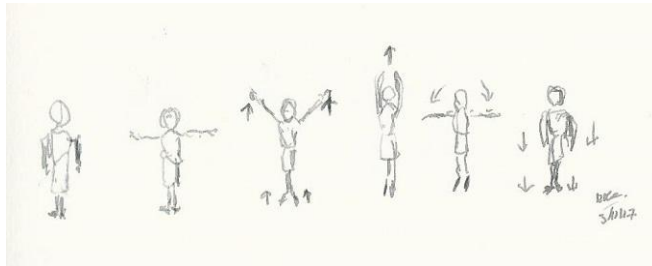


Sustainable Performance 2017-2018

Playing better with less effort / Rike Hesselink, physiotherapist.

Lesson 2 (2017-11-02)

To day we start with an exercise: Moving your arms and keeping the balance on your feet while you are standing. We notice that to be able to keep your arms sideways, you need to find the right position of your arms. Especially in your elbows and shoulders. When someone pushes your outstretched arm a little, you should feel your feet. When you loose your balance, you probably kept your elbow too straight.



Elbows and knees are similar joints in that they are shock absorbers. Later we will go into this more.

Without movement there is no music.

First there is movement and then there is noise. The sound or the music comes after the movement.

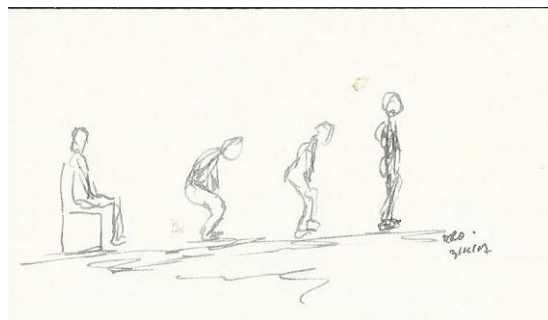
We observe movement in the body of the musician. Is there too much or just a little? Is the whole body involved in playing or only partly? Is the movement connected with the music? How you move is dictated by the piece you play and your interpretation of it.

Listen with your eyes and watch with your ears!

Today we observe a trumpet player.

We notice when she plays there is hardly any movement in the lower back and the legs. She knows it, but how can she change this? She tells us that she often suffers from cramped fingers.

We will do some **experiments** to find out if she is able to move her lower back and legs. We ask her to sit down on a chair and get back up to standing while she is playing. That's difficult to get up and down. Very often when you have to play and to do a simple movement you cannot play so well. That is quite normal! (After such experiments playing goes easier as it is less difficult at that moment.)



Without playing everybody tries to sit and to stand and observe what is happening in his or her own body. How are you using your legs, knees, ankles and feet? Are they remaining on the floor or are you shifting your weight backwards and lifting your toes? And what about your breathing? Does it continue or does it stall?

What is happening when you are humming in the meantime? Listen to the sound? Maybe you hear the trembling of your legs. Are you finishing the sound in a nice way or do you suddenly stop? You can hear if your knees are pushing together, pushing outward or if they are remaining straight...

When you have to put something down onto the floor while standing and grasp it while sitting again, you take your weight with you, no

broken sound in humming! Your spine and all the joints of hip, knee, ankle and foot are being used.

This is the movement forward/backward in legs and spine.

Conclusion: your legs are important while playing! Also for musicians who are sitting!

It is particularly important that your hip joints are free to move. They are the pivots between your trunk and your legs. It is the hinge of bending forwards when you are sitting.

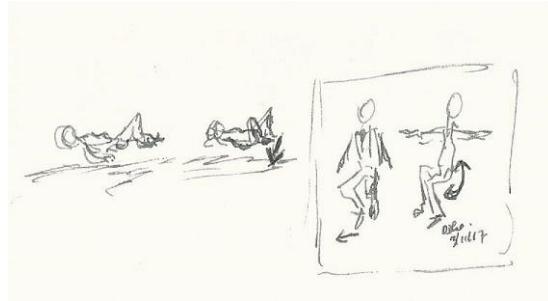
We did a little game by pushing forwards and joking to keep your pressure away by surprise. Is your partner falling forward?
Remember the movie **Karate Kid!**

Not only forward/backward movement is important but the movement sideways and rotations are important as well.

If you hand an apple or a little ball from one hand into the other in a figure of eight, turning the palm of your hand up and down, you can feel the same movement in your feet. The movement runs through your whole body. So even **hands are connected with feet if you allow the movement.**

To find more freedom in your hip joints: Lay on your back with bent knees, feet on the floor and then move one leg a little sideways without lifting the pelvis and the bottom of your foot off the floor. It is a small movement. Be aware of your other leg too! Only one leg is allowed to move. You can help the movement by putting your hand at the side of your thigh, giving direction to the movement. Try both legs!

The following movement is the same as the one before, but with the second leg moving to the same side. Your pelvis remains still on the floor. It is the movement of skiing!



Then again you make the same movement but let the leg nearest to the floor go first and the second leg will follow. You will probably feel a certain **stretch in your lower back or at the back of your hip**. Since we are sitting a lot, those muscles are shortened and can give restrictions.

After experiencing those movements you turn to one side, move onto your knees and stand on your legs. They will probably feel a bit heavy, but fine. You are prepared for playing!

We finished with the exercise we have done at the beginning of this lesson. It seems to be easier now to keep your balance while moving your arms!

Assignment: Experiment with simple movements to have a comfortable body while you are playing.

Next time we will explore the possibilities of sitting on a chair.