

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation for the study

While working intensively on producing a better flute tone, I became aware of a grave problem, namely, not being able to fully achieve what I knew I was capable of, because of interferences. Since that time I have taught within a music college system and observed other teachers at work. This showed me that details and combinations of these interferences (mainly physical tensions) vary with each person. I became convinced that the teacher has the responsibility of helping the student to recognise and eliminate these. My discovery of the Alexander Technique, and my subsequent lessons in this technique, has led me to believe that the Alexander Technique should be incorporated into the training of flutists.

1.2 Aim of the study

This study is primarily aimed at examining, through both two case studies and my own experience, specific ways in which a flutist might increase his kinaesthetic awareness through knowledge of and application of the Alexander Technique, and apply this to the art of flute playing. It aims to assess the possibilities of using the body in a certain way, thus eliminating the unnecessary wastage of energy.

1.3 Background to the study

Because the Alexander Technique is concerned with the co-ordination of mind and body use, it has attracted writers from vastly different fields of inquiry. But specifically the author feels that there is a definite need for an exploration of the relationships between learning the skill of flute playing and the optimal use of body energy. Alexander's own books are fastidiously detailed explanations of both his practice and his theory; they are essential reading for any student of his Technique.

References to the advantages of the Alexander Technique are found in several books, but little detail is available about how the Technique has to be used in the production of tone in the playing of the flute. There is, however, enough material to indicate that other flutists had benefitted from their own application of the Alexander Technique.

2.1 Development of the Alexander Technique

Through the two case studies, vital information about the application of the Alexander Technique in bringing about changes in playing and tone production, with particular attention to posture and breathing, was acquired.

1.4 Presentation

Chapter 2 presents of a short introduction, consisting of a short biography of F. M. Alexander, as well as a short summary of the importance of the Primary Control in the context of using the Alexander Technique. The aspects of the flute blowing technique which are most relevant to the Alexander Technique are stated.

Chapter 3 contains the knowledge I have gained through my own experience of the Alexander Technique and the application of this Technique in connection with my own playing of the flute.

In Chapter 4 the two case studies are described in detail. The co-operation in flute lessons with the different Alexander teachers are mentioned and discussed in connection with my own teaching of Alexander Technique principles.

2.1.1 Primary Control

In Chapter 5 general concepts relating to the teaching of the Alexander Technique are detailed; the main aspects being, even before actually playing the flute, how to maintain a balanced body posture when standing, when holding the instrument and when breathing. In this chapter the use of the Alexander Technique in performing situations, when tension and interference problems arise, is also looked at.

Chapter 6 comprises the summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

2.1 Development of the Alexander Technique

Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955) was born in Tasmania on the 20th of January 1869. He also grew up and was educated in Tasmania. As a child, he received extra tuition, because normal schooling did not suit him and he suffered from chronic ill-health. By the time he was sixteen he had saved enough money to leave for Melbourne, to begin his drama education and an acting career. He became plagued by becoming hoarse during performances, for which the suggested treatments were inhalations and rest periods. The problem actually only occurred when he was reciting on stage. Over the years his throat condition gradually worsened to the point where he would periodically lose his voice completely. He applied all medical advice in the minutest detail, but none helped him. His career was eventually put in jeopardy when he lost his voice almost completely while reciting at a particularly important venue.

At this point Alexander had reached a dead end. Because no doctor was able to help him, he decided to search himself. Thus began his personal search for a solution to the problem of losing his voice during performances as an actor.

2.1.1 Primary Control

Alexander started observing himself, with the aid of several mirrors, while speaking in conversation and while reciting in performance. He subsequently noticed three habits which occurred when he was performing:

He pulled his head back.

He lowered his larynx.

He audibly sucked air in through his mouth.

He noticed that the pulling back of his head was causing the larynx to be depressed; this also raised his chest, therefore narrowing and hollowing his back. He found the same habits occurred when he was speaking normally, although to a lesser extent. The more he wanted to use his voice forcibly, to breathe less audibly and to produce a good speaking voice, the more he found that he was unable to do what he wanted just by willing it. He was forced to turn his attention to one of the other habits which he had noticed - the pulling back of his head. Experimenting painstakingly, he found that he could stop the depressing of the larynx and the gulping for air by changing the position of his head - by not pulling it back and down. Having realised the importance of the head position, he experimented further and discovered that pulling his head too far forward also resulted in depressing his larynx and led to hoarseness. After six months of search and analysis, he finally realised the importance of head balance in the correct functioning of breathing, speaking and standing. Although he had succeeded in isolating the apparent causes, he did not stop his research through observation. The imbalance of his head was also related to his tendency to lift his chest and shorten his stature, subsequently hollowing his back. As Alexander relates (1932:8):

This led me on to a long series of experiments, in some of which I attempted to prevent the shortening of the stature, in others actually to lengthen it, noting the results in each case. After further experimentation, I found at last that in order to maintain a lengthening of the stature it was necessary that my head should tend to go upwards, not downwards, when I put it forward; in short, that to lengthen, I must put it forward and up.

After Alexander had discovered and consciously realised the relativity in the use of the head, neck and torso, he was led to the eventual understanding of the *Primary Control* of the individual (Alexander 1932:9). This term was used by Alexander to describe the balanced relationship between head, neck and torso. It implies a tension-free balancing of the head on the tip of the spine - rather than being held in a tension grip on the tip of the spine. This allows both maximum freedom and economy of energy usage during all bodily activities. It can readily be observed in young children whose bodies have not yet been distorted by tension.

In his book THE USE OF THE SELF (1932) his experiences are described in detail. He also published MAN'S SUPREME INHERITANCE (1910), CONSTRUCTIVE CONSCIOUS CONTROL OF THE INDIVIDUAL (1923) and THE UNIVERSAL CONSTANT IN LIVING (1941). His self-developed system of body re-education, that took him a lifetime to evolve, is described in these books.

The Alexander Technique is an important addition to man's resources of self-awareness and personal education. Established by F M Alexander in the late 1890's, the Technique is valued in educational, theatrical and musical circles as a method of psycho-physical re-education. Lessons in the Technique help the pupil overcome patterns of bodily misuse that interfere with poise and free movement during activity. This encourages improved functioning, both physically and psychologically, with attendant benefits in co-ordination, health and well-being (Weymess 1984:44).

There are as many definitions of the Alexander Technique as there are people writing about it. It is difficult to explain the essence of the technique, because it has to do with the co-ordination of mind and body. Alexander's own books are detailed explanations of practice and theory. From different fields of knowledge, he attracted attention and reaction because his findings were so perceptively and persistently detailed in these books.

One of his most prominent students, Professor John Dewey, eminent philosopher and educationalist, wrote in the introduction to Alexander's book THE USE OF THE SELF (Alexander 1932:9):

[...] his procedure and conclusions meet all the requirements of the strictest scientific method [...] [H]e has applied the method in a field in which it never has been used before - that of our judgements and beliefs concerning ourselves and our activities. If there can be developed a technique which will enable individuals really to secure the right use of themselves, then the factor on which depends the final use of all other forms of energy will be brought under control.

[...] all that Mr. Alexander says about the unity of the physical and psychical in the psychophysical; about our habitually wrong use of

ourselves and the part the wrong use plays in generating all kinds of unnecessary tensions and wastes of energy; about the vitiation of our sensory appreciations which form the material of our judgements of ourselves; about the unconditional necessity of inhibition of our customary acts, and the tremendous difficulty found in not "doing" something as soon as an habitual act is suggested, together with the great change in moral and mental attitude that takes place as proper co-ordinations are established.

2.2 Physical aspects of the blowing technique on the flute

It is repeatedly stated in various textbooks about orchestral instruments that the flute is the most agile of all the wind instruments, capable of almost any nuance and technical difficulty, and that the tonal clarity in the high register floats above the orchestral ensemble and gives a shimmering brilliance to the whole (Bate 1976:229). What is mostly not stated, is that none of the said virtues can be attained by the flutist without years of constant practice. Nor is anything said about, for instance, the difficulties of reaching the same brilliance and full tone in the lower register as in the other registers, or the difficulties of intonation and playing without harshness in the top register.

(For the purposes of this study, I shall be concentrating on only the physical aspects of playing the flute that are relevant to the application of the Alexander Technique.)

Playing the flute is a very healthy activity if looked at from the point of view of, for example, a lung specialist. Flutists (like singers) are forced to develop their respiratory capacity, normally using the healthy principle of exhausting their vital capacity. By letting the air out relatively slowly, without leaving any 'stale' air behind, no 'residues' of air are built up in the lungs. The heart and blood circulation are thus provided with more than enough oxygen, which means that a potentially high blood pressure may well be lowered in this way. The possibility of a flutist having problems with high blood pressure is, in other words, quite minimal (Wurz 1992:248). The sometimes mentioned danger of contracting lung emphyzema is apparently unfounded.

2.2.1 The use of the body in an asymmetrical position

Unfortunately for flutists, the situation from the point of view of an orthopaedic surgeon is a little different. The fact that many flutists (and singers) have problems with backaches is quite well-known. Less well-known are the causes thereof and the possibilities of avoiding these kinds of difficulties. A survey was made by a Swedish doctor Silverstolpe, who was also a violinist. He examined and treated a great number of musicians, who played various kinds of instruments and were having trouble with backaches. Statistically, after examining 647 music students between the ages of 17 to 24, he found 33% to be suffering from frequent backache, of which the greatest percentage (75%) were found to be flutists! (Followed by double bass players with 73%, guitarists with 53% and violinists with 52%.) Silverstolpe did not only effectively treat instrumentalists as a doctor, but also tried, in co-operation with the teachers, to find the possible causes, seeking better and less strenuous ways of using the body (Wurz 1992:249). Unfortunately his findings were only documented in a short published article and in his own manuscript.

The main and specialised cause of risks in playing the flute is seen by Silverstolpe to be the asymmetrical construction of the instrument (Wurz 1992:250). Brian Warren (1992:11), a British flutist who is also a teacher of the Alexander Technique, states that it is significant that most instrumentalists who become Alexander teachers, are either flutists or violinists - apparently because of the "off-balanced position you have to put yourself in" in order to play the instrument. The head is turned to the side and the arms are in an asymmetrical position. Warren thinks that the reason that this playing position causes these problems is contained in the evolution of the arms over millions of years, during which man learned to feed by bringing the arms up to the mouth. The elbow joints have evolved to take the hands to the mouth; so to play the clarinet or oboe, requires a more natural position. In Silverstolpe's study, the oboists and clarinetists were found to be far less likely to have problems with backache: the oboists being on 14% and the clarinetists on 10%.

It is somehow significant that, of musicians who train to become Alexander teachers, most play either violin or flute (Warren 1992:2). They seem to be the two instruments

that cause the most tension in playing - probably precisely because of the awkward stance involved in holding these instruments. The most desirable ideal is to have a flute or violin teacher who is also an Alexander teacher, but these people are few and hard to find.

2.2.2 Keeping the neck free

Warren states (1992:12) that the difficulty in keeping the neck free, while bringing the instrument up to the mouth to play, is one of the main problems in playing the flute:

Very few people can do that without tightening up. Once you have tightened the neck up you find that you have taken the whole body out of balance and that you are obliged to use a lot of tension in playing, particularly in the arms and fingers. [...] I think it is also significant that most flute players experience more fingering problems than other woodwind players because the arms are already out of kilter as it were. [...] If you discover that you are pulling the head back slightly, that slight pull back impedes the working of the nervous system, as all the nerves of the fingers come from the cervical vertebrae located in the neck. Ideally one should not need Alexander teachers because if you are a really intelligent flute teacher you should teach it all as part of the lessons [...] as good teachers do.

2.2.3 Starting with the headjoint only

When a child starts learning to play the flute, the first aspect to cope with is indeed the awkward posture. Fortunately, most people do not start with the instrument as a whole, but first only attempt to produce a sound on the headjoint alone; which implies that the arms are not used awkwardly in the beginning. Finding the right angle of placing the lips on the lipplate, blowing more or less halfway into and over the embouchure hole while shaping the lips, keeping the tongue out of the way, nevertheless ready to play a tongued attack, also present their own difficulties. Gustav Scheck (1975:70) states in his encompassing book about the flute that the variety of possible adjustments and differences in the small space between the lips and the sides of the embouchure are innumerable. As early as 1707 Jacques Hotteterre advised in his *Principes de la flûte traversiere* (Wurz 1992:110) that the right place for the embouchure should be looked for by turning the instrument

inwards and outwards - after keeping the lips closed together, pressed into a flat position and putting pressure on the corners of the mouth - watching with the aid of a mirror. From this kind of intricate direction, it is already quite obvious that merely attempting to find the optimal position for the lips to produce a sound could cause undue muscle tension and thereby wrong or unnecessary body use. However the teacher goes about avoiding this, it is important to help the student from the outset to be aware of the use of his body (Wurz 1992:40).

2.3 Other relevant aspects

2.3.1 Breathing and tone production

In listening to the tone produced by some flutists (or singers), one can be bothered or irritated when the vibrato, or the tone itself, sounds “pushed” (Lloyd 1986:50). Lloyd states that this could be because the shoulders become too tight in breathing, causing subsequent tightness in the chest and throat. A closer examination of the breathing technique and the breathing capacity would probably show that the muscles around the ribcage and chest are strong but tight, the diaphragm rather tight and without flexibility, and the intake of breath mostly audible.

2.3.2 Avoiding undue tension in the face muscles and embouchure

According to Bate (1976:231) flutists broadly recognise two types of embouchure: either tight or relaxed. A tight embouchure causes the face muscles around the mouth to be firmly braced sideways. The flute is pressed quite strongly against the lower lip and the corners of the mouth are often turned up. This is the description of an embouchure that causes undue tension and can cause subsequent tension in the face, neck, shoulders and arms. For a more relaxed embouchure Bate, amongst many other authors, states that the corners of the lips should be “turned more or less loosely outward”, to form a rounder aperture. Control of the air stream is mostly obtained by varying the tension at the sides of the mouth and by slight forward and backward movements of the jaw. This ‘relaxed embouchure’ presents certain

technical advantages: diminuendo and crescendo passages in the high register are eased, as is slurring over wide intervals (Bate 1976:232).

The use of the tongue should also be mentioned in connection with Alexander Technique. Most commonly, the flutist starts a note by forming the letter “T” with the tongue on the hard palate behind the teeth. By touching the upper lip with the tongue and withdrawing it quickly, a somewhat “smarter” effect can be created (Bate 1976:235). In using the techniques of double or triple tonguing on the flute, the tongue of the player should be efficiently trained to play fast, using, in exact alternation, the tip and the back of the tongue. This intricate action of the tongue can only to be carried out effectively when the throat, shoulders and neck muscles are free and uninhibited (Wurz 1992:70).

2.3.3 Technical fluency and agility of the fingers

As Bate states (1976:230): “Supporting the flute should never be allowed to interfere with the fingers, so a good position is essential from the first.”

The fact that flutists experience more fingering problems than other players of woodwind instruments is said by the flutist and teacher of the Alexander Technique Brian Warren (1992:11) to be caused by the arms being held to the side of the body, with the head turned to the same side so that the body is in an “off-balanced position” (see Chapter 2.2.1). According to Adrian Brett (1992:11), a well-known British flutist, one has to work very hard on the flute to learn to control both the closing and the *release* of the keys; while clarinetists, for example, can play “with lots of energetic movement, and hand and finger positions which would be quite unacceptable to a flutist”. This implies that a flutist has to be more careful and disciplined in using exactly the correct hand and finger positions when teaching, playing or practising the flute. Also, in this respect, body awareness is an important aspect to be kept in mind.

CHAPTER 3

KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

3.1 Introduction

From when I was very young, I have been aware of being tall. It never really bothered me, except that I started slouching (as many teenagers do) when I was about sixteen, because I wanted to “fit in” and look more insignificant. At that time I was spending an hour a week with my flute teacher, mostly trying to solve technical problems. I was also playing in a youth orchestra, where I was slouching even more in sitting, because everybody else seemed so much shorter. Nobody paid attention to my bad posture while playing the flute, although I had a very good teacher.

3.2 Discovery of the significance of posture

It was not until a few years later, after completing four years of studying music, setting out to start an orchestral career, and playing solo-recitals, that I realised that my tone when performing was always of a lesser quality than when practising. The more I tried to correct this and make the tone sound as I wanted it to, the less successful I became.

The next problem which occurred, but which did not seem to have anything to do with playing the flute, was that I was getting such a hoarse voice. It seemed to get worse after practising the flute, but I did not pay any attention to this ‘co-incidence’. I started practising in front of a mirror, not really knowing what I was looking for. I also tried to change my embouchure, to produce a tone that sounded more relaxed and open. While standing in front of the mirror one day, I suddenly realised that I was automatically putting my neck forward on my shoulders when bringing the flute up to

my mouth to start playing. I was effectively shortening my stature when playing my instrument. Needless to say, this also looked very unattractive. I started attempting to do it differently, keeping my head high on my shoulders, bringing my arms slowly and carefully up to my head. At first I realised that the old position immediately returned when I tried to play a few notes. But after experimenting for some time, I realised that there was a change occurring in the sound I produced. When I forgot about the fact that I was attempting to stop slouching when playing and jutted my neck forward as before, the tone also sounded more strained. Whereas when I took the trouble to be careful and managed to play a few notes in my new position, the sound was different - more relaxed. But when I tried to keep this sound, while concentrating on something else, the old habit returned. This brought me to the realisation that I was unable to produce the tone I wanted, because this new posture felt wrong and the old habits returned.

3.3 The first lessons in Alexander Technique

After about two years of working on sound in various ways, I heard about the Alexander Technique. I was giving recitals with a singer, the soprano Gwyneth Lloyd, who was also an Alexander teacher. The first feature of her singing which struck me was the fact that everything she sung sounded so incredibly relaxed. Her sound was absolutely wonderful - even without vibrato.

The first Alexander lesson with Gwyneth Lloyd was an unforgettable experience - I had the distinct feeling that I was being gently streamlined. It was not any kind of exercise or yoga discipline. I was lying on the foam-covered table, tense and full of apprehension. She did not actually seem to be touching me, only gently repositioning the limbs and muscles of my entire body. She started by placing her hands over the tops of my shoulders, performing some kind of subtle repositioning, which caused them to feel as if they were floating outwards. She kept on placing her hands on several parts of my body, rearranging my head, my arms and legs, my feet, and finally my hands. My spine felt elongated, my whole body relaxed and loose. She showed me how to get up from this position, without unnecessary tension.

Afterwards, I was more aware of my posture than ever before. I felt as if I was floating along, my shoulders stretching outwards and my lungs expanding.

I wanted to be able to convey this wonderful feeling of body contact to playing the flute. For this to occur I had to solve the problem of combining the playing of an instrument with the most optimal body use.

I realised that there were a few habits that were standing in the way of my making the progress I desired:

1. My neck was not free enough to produce the desired sound. I was trying different exercises to make the neck muscles relax, but they did not seem to have much effect - especially after I had been playing for a while. I was continually tightening the throat and neck muscles.
2. My arms were becoming too tense. I seemed to be lifting the flute always higher, which caused my fingers to start clutching the flute; this in turn caused problems with demanding technical passages.
3. My shoulders were too high. My torso seemed to be dropping forward while playing and I seemed to be fighting an ever-lasting war against gravity. In spite of my efforts of will, I was not able to overcome this problem.
4. In the process of breathing, I felt that the lower back was contracting; this was impeding my ability to distribute the accumulated air in such a way that I could control the length of phrases, the tone colour, the vibrato, etc.

These were the most noticeable symptoms of a flute playing technique that was becoming unnecessarily effortful - and therefore tiring. Each person has his own combination of physical tensions, varying according to the type and amount of

stress, and the length of time the habits causing the tension have been allowed to run unchecked (Lloyd 1986:2).

In the next Alexander lessons, we started by standing, sitting and standing up again. In my lower back there was a knot of tension, which I was told to release. I was trying to get the feeling of “relaxing into the sitting bones” (Lloyd 1986:75), which actually caused me to relax the tension in my upper thighs.

My teacher was conveying the messages to my body through her hands. She was also talking, explaining in a calm way what she wanted to happen. I was rarely told to “do” anything. After each lesson, I felt a distinct difference in my body awareness.

It became apparent to me that I was also depressing my larynx, especially when I was feeling apprehensive or tense in any way; this was causing my speaking voice problems. It was suggested to me that I open my chest, so that my shoulders could become wider, as I tended to bring my shoulders round to the front and downwards, particularly while playing the flute. By bringing my shoulders to the front, I was depressing the whole front area of my thorax. By contrast, when opening the chest, a tingling sensation occasionally occurred in the top of my arms and shoulders. It was explained to me that this was the result of the increased circulation.

In a standing position, I was learning to release the unnecessary tension, not only in my shoulders and upper body, but also in my legs. However, when I tried this while playing the flute, it felt wrong. This was mainly because I was feeling too relaxed to play faster notes, for instance. I decided that I must incorporate what I had learned, but that I should be very patient and allow myself a few months of not playing or practising for anything in particular.

3.4 Learning body awareness and experiencing Primary Control

As I became more aware of my body, and of the wrong way I was using it, I also became familiar with the idea of releasing tension in one part of the anatomy by

allowing a release to take place in another part. I also became aware of the stiffening of my arms when I was getting ready to play something which my brain told me was difficult. This is called "interference" (Alexander 1932:58). I learned that interference was obviously present in my playing of the flute. There were signs that it was present in speaking, walking and other movements as well.

To get the optimal position of my head, in balance with the centre of my back, I was asked by my teacher to think up in my body, to drop my nose slightly, and release my weight downwards. I had to "let it happen" rather than pushing or wanting it. The simultaneous feeling of my body's movement up and down into the sitting bones had to be allowed. I became aware at this stage that I was pulling my shoulders back rather than letting the releases simply happen. When I focused my attention on the sound I wanted to produce when playing the flute, the awareness of the mechanisms in my body had a freeing effect on my ability to produce a good sound.

The correct head position, which Alexander called the Primary Control, was acquired mostly by the repetition of the most basic procedures such as sitting, standing up, and sitting down again. I was asked to put my "face back into my neck", to imagine the tip of my nose being attached to the first vertebrae at the back of the neck. This piece of imagery was helping me very effectively to get the sensation of pins and needles, particularly in the shoulders, which meant increased blood circulation. The sensation of sitting down was very interesting. I became aware of pulling the muscles short in the back of my neck when bending to sit down. I was asked to let the weight go into the sitting bones, while keeping the position of the head on the shoulders intact, so that it would not detract from my balance. I was not allowed to push my bottom out towards the chair. By letting go of the tension in my legs I was able to overcome this interference and sit down in a very graceful manner - without even having to try.

This becoming aware of my habit of shortening the muscles at the back of the neck when sitting down brought me to the realisation that I was doing the same when lifting my arms to start playing the flute (see Chapter 4).

3.5 Transferring Primary Control to the playing of the flute

After the repetition of the sitting and standing procedure helped to generate a feeling of lightness, we went on to walking. Many hours of walking, outside the time of the lessons, helped me to be more free in the movement of my body, without slouching, pulling or over-stretching any muscles. The encouragement which came from realising that I was overcoming so-called energy blocks and that I had a naturally responsive body system, was helping me to keep trying to acquire the same balance in the playing of my instrument.

The use of the Alexander Technique in playing was sometimes causing a chaotic, jumbled feeling, and after the first few lessons I actually felt very confused. This started disappearing though, after about the tenth lesson.

The creation of conscious connections between several muscle groups was helping me to a great extent to control myself and the reactions of my body in stressful situations (see Chapter 5.6). This was because I was becoming increasingly aware of what was happening in my body.

The concept of being fixed in my old long-held habits, and of holding residual tension in my muscles after playing activities, became very important in the process of learning the releases that should take place in my muscles. I was finding the new looseness in my neck muscles, with which I had previously had so much trouble, very encouraging.

To experience the releasing of my lower back was also a great encouragement. Long periods of standing, practising or playing had always caused a considerable amount of pain in this area, probably because I was naturally tending to lean backwards, hollowing my back. I was asked to think my weight into my heels, to let the new releases which I had learned just happen, rather than to think that I actually had to *do* something.

My speaking voice was becoming better whenever I allowed it to flow freely without tension in the throat. My teacher, who was a singer, explained that I was creating more space in the throat, because I was in fact learning to let go of the tension and effort in the muscles while playing; all this was influencing my speaking voice as well.

4.1 Introduction

I found that the changes were taking place so fast, that I could not really keep up with them. To concentrate on playing an instrument, while learning awareness (i.e. being aware of how the body reacts) is rather tiring. Extensive application of the Alexander Technique can therefore be virtually exhausting.

Since beginning working in this way on the technique of tone production on the flute, I have found that it is quite impossible for me to teach a student to produce a good flute tone, without also transferring an understanding of the Alexander Technique in connection with both acquiring and keeping a proper blowing technique.

The connections and applications emerge and grow of their own accord. Although I was not hunting for opportunities to apply the Alexander Technique at every single turn, I found it quite impossible to keep the Alexander Technique out of my teaching. The border between the application of the Alexander Technique and my playing the flute was becoming increasingly vague. Analysing and understanding what was going on by intelligent observation became integrated into my teaching and learning. As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "We are by nature observers of our own conduct." (Brett 1992: 11).

4.2 Case 1: Gudrun

Gudrun was an advanced amateur flutist who had been playing for more than ten years. She had been taking flute lessons while a student, and then went to teaching Geography in a school. She was playing various kinds of amateur gigs, mostly with an Austrian folklore windband. She found it quite pleasant to play and was aware that the sound she was producing on the flute was deteriorating. She was a classically-trained flutist with a rich, natural sound, but this was becoming strained