

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**THE USE OF THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE IN THE
IMPROVEMENT OF FLUTE TONE.**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr J de C Hinch, for his effort in sending texts, guiding and generally helping me through this study. Without his encouragement and support, I could not have completed this task.

I also wish to convey my appreciation to Professor Henk Temmingh for the fact that he was open to the idea of this study and gave me the opportunity of going ahead with it, even though I was, and still am, living in Europe.

AMANDA J BOSCH

To my parents and friends in South Africa who sent me articles, general advice and helped me manage organisational problems, I am very thankful.

To the Alexander teachers with whom I worked in South Africa, Germany and Austria, I am very grateful. Their interest and their advice to me was always helpful.

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

degree Magister Musicae (Performing Arts) in the Department of Music

To my colleagues at the University of Salzburg who went to great lengths in helping me obtain what I needed, I am very grateful.

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Findings and conclusions reached in this dissertation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Human Sciences Research Council.

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Amanda Bosch

Salzburg, November 1997

ABSTRACT

The use of the Alexander Technique in teaching, performing and practising the flute is investigated, in order to determine how to apply the Technique to the art of producing a good flute tone.

The author's application of the Alexander Technique to teaching and playing the flute is described. Knowledge was acquired both through doing case studies on two flute pupils, and through the integration of personal experience, gained through taking Alexander Technique lessons, into flute lessons. This is set out in detail.

The decision to work intensively on the technique of sound production on the flute, made the author aware of the fact that we, as teachers and performers, encounter a large number of different problems in teaching and playing. Matters are complicated by a pupil's eagerness and "wanting to do things right". This can cause a certain amount of apprehension and even anxiety. Often the habits which inhibit progress prove very difficult for the teacher to correct. This study is aimed at detecting and solving these problems by using the Alexander Technique; hopefully leading to a better understanding of how the Technique can be applied to flute teaching and playing. Posture, breathing and embouchure control are specifically addressed.

For the teacher or performer who has little understanding of his/her own problems in playing the flute - e.g. in coping with the loss of a good tone caused by stage fright and other anxieties - the use of the Alexander Technique can mean the creation a new sense of physical freedom and mental flexibility. A knowledge of how to work on changing faulty habits and the creating of new and better means of body use, can be gained through the taking of Alexander

Technique lessons. The general principles and various applications of the Technique are described.

The problems musicians face - e.g. postural problems from sitting or standing for hours while practising the instrument, instrument-specific problems such as pain in the arms or shoulders, or physical tension caused by anxiety - are all habitual difficulties which can be detected, weakened and, hopefully, even erased through the use of the Alexander Technique.

This study aims to show that mind-body awareness work is fundamental for the teacher, the pupil and the performer. Very often, what appear to be simple problems in musical performance are bound to deeply-felt and long-standing emotions and experiences. Therefore, the seemingly simple problems associated with producing a good flute tone cannot be addressed without dealing with the person as a whole.

It is thus crucial for us as musicians to attend to the whole person - as we practise, perform and teach. This study attempts to lead musicians to a better understanding of all facets of themselves and others, through the application of the Alexander Technique.

OPSOMMING

TEN KEYWORDS

Die gebruik van die Alexandertegniek in die onderwys en oefening van, asook uitvoering op, die fluit word ondersoek, met die doel om vas te stel hoe die Alexander Technique kan word in die kuns van goeie toonproduksie in fluitspel.

Primary Control

Die skynbaar se aanwending van die Alexandertegniek in die onderwys- en bespeeling van die fluit word beskryf. Kennis wat deur gevallestudies van twee

Flute

Flute gespeel opgedoen is, word ondersoek, asook deur die integrasie van sensoriese ervaring deur lesse in Alexandertegniek. Hierdie word in detail uiteengesit.

Teaching

Relaxation

sluit om intensief aan toonproduksie op die fluit te werk, het die slaver bewus geword van die feit dat ons as onderwyser en uitvoerend kunstenaars 'n baie groot spektrum verskillende probleme die fluit moet oënskynlik

Body awareness

verkompliseer deur die leering se gretigheid om alles reg te wil maak kan 'n sekere mate van spanning en angstigheids veroorsaak. Dikwels

Breathing

word gewoonlik aangeleer wat vordering in die wissel ry en wat vir die onderwyser baie moeilik is om te komkeer. Hierdie studie is daarop gerig om genoemde probleme, met die hulp van die Alexandertegniek, makliker te kan maak en oplos. Hooplik kan dit ook lei tot 'n beter begrip van hoe die Tegniek aangewend kan word in fluitoefening en -spel. Liggaamshouding, asemhaling, en beheer van embouchure word spesifiek aangespreek.

Vir die onderwyser of uitvoerende kunstenaar wat min begrip het van sy/haar eie probleme in die praktyk, by. hoe om 'n valies van toonkwaliteit in 'n spanningsituasie (verhoogde stres) te herstel, kan die aanwending van die Alexandertegniek 'n nuwe gevoel van fisiese vryheid en mentale buigsaamheid beteken. Hoe om swak gewoontes van verkeerde liggaamsgebruik te verander kan deur die toewyding van Alexandertegniek-lesse daadwerklik bewerkstellig

OPSOMMING

Die gebruik van die Alexandertegniek in die onderwys en oefening van, asook uitvoering op, die fluit word ondersoek, met die doel om vas te stel hoe die Tegniek aangewend kan word in die kuns van goeie toonproduksie in fluitspel.

Die skrywer se aanwending van die Alexandertegniek in die onderwys- en bespeling van die fluit word beskryf. Kennis wat deur gevallestudies van twee leerlinge opgedoen is, word ondersoek, asook deur die integrasie van persoonlike ervaring deur lesse in Alexandertegniek. Hierdie word in detail uiteengesit.

Deur die besluit om intensief aan toonproduksie op die fluit te werk, het die skrywer bewus geword van die feit dat ons as onderwysers en uitvoerende kunstenaars 'n baie groot spektrum verskillende probleme die hoof moet bied. Sake word gekompliseer deur die leerling se gretigheid om "alles reg te wil doen". Dit kan 'n sekere mate van spanning en angstigheid veroorsaak. Dikwels word gewoontes aangeleer wat vordering in die wiele ry en wat vir die onderwyser baie moeilik is om te korrigeer. Hierdie studie is daarop gerig om genoemde probleme, met die hulp van die Alexandertegniek, makliker te kan raaksien en oplos. Hopelik kan dit ook lei tot 'n beter begrip van hoe die Tegniek aangewend kan word in fluitonderrig en -spel. Liggaamshouding, asemhaling en beheer van embouchure word spesifiek aangespreek.

Vir die onderwyser of uitvoerende kunstenaar wat min begrip het van sy/haar eie probleme in die praktyk, bv. hoe om 'n verlies van toonkwaliteit in 'n spanningsituasie (verhoogvrees) te hanteer, kan die aanwending van die Alexandertegniek 'n nuwe gevoel van fisiese vryheid en mentale buigbaarheid beteken. Hoe om swak gewoontes van verkeerde liggaamsgebruik te verander kan deur die bywoning van Alexandertegniek-lesse daadwerklik bewerkstellig

word. Die algemene beginsels en verskeidenheid aanwendings van die Alexandertegniek word beskryf.

Die instrument-spesifieke probleme waarmee musici te doen het, bv. postuurprobleme a.g.v. ure lank sit of staan en oefen, probleme met pyn in die skouers of arms, of fisiese verkramping veroorsaak deur spanningsituasies, is alles gewoonteprobleme wat raakgesien, verlig en, hopelik, uitgewis kan word deur die gebruik van die Alexandertegniek.

Hierdie studie bewys ook dat die bewuste verbinding van liggaamlike en mentale werk vir die onderwyser, leerling en uitvoerende kunstenaar van basiese belang is. Baie dikwels kom dit voor dat eenvoudige klein probleme in musiekuitvoering verwant aan diepliggende en langdurige emosies en ervarings. Daarom kan aan eenvoudige probleme soos toonproduksie in fluitspel nie gewerk word sonder om die persoon as 'n geheel te beskou nie.

Dit is dus vir musici van die uiterste belang om aan die persoon as geheel aandag te gee; wanneer ons oefen, lesgee en speel. Hopelik kan hierdie studie daartoe lei dat ons deur die geheelbeskouing onself en ander beter kan verstaan, deur die gebruik van die Alexandertegniek.

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