

Eurhythmics with Professional Musicians

Working with professional musicians it is another kind of work than teaching beginners/learners. The musicians are advanced within their fields and so much trained in their respective areas – much more than the Eurhythmics teacher. This gives the Eurhythmics teacher another role than he/she otherwise has.

(Examples of this work can be seen in the video.)

General training or specific pieces?

The work with professionals must be based on their needs and wishes. What do they expect, and what do they want to get out of it? Mostly the musicians want to work on their pieces, but sometimes they asked for working with more general aspects, such as timing, rhythm, or active listening. In addition to their expectations, I can also add things they maybe not think of, for example balance, posture, and communication.

Even if the work focus in their pieces it can be carried out in a way that also give some general training, for example:

- Posture
- Balance
- Communication
- Awareness
- Active listening
- Timing
- Improvisation

Here follow some examples of working with professionals.

Joie de Vivre Trio

The Joie de Vivre Trio consist of three professional musicians who are teachers at North-West university in Potchefstroom. It has been a great pleasure to work with them.

We started each workshop with warming up, and we also did some exercises with focus in balance, posture, and interaction in the group. Then we worked on their pieces, an exploratory work based on their own recordings.

Examples of activities:

- Follow your own instrument with improvised movements,
- Follow another instrument with improvised movements,
- All three follow the same instrument / separate instruments,
- Show the phrasing with a stick,

- Follow the melody with a scarf,
- Bounce the accents with a ball,
- Clap the rhythm on your partners back,
- Find common movements that express your emotions in a certain part,
- Make a dance together where you show the character in the piece,
- Improvise together without planning in advance, while holding the parachute.

I also put in different kinds of frames as a help to focus and explore different possibilities:

- Only move one part of the body, for example the chest /the hips / elbows / hands ...
- Lean toward each other's backs or leaning outwards while holding onto a common object,
- Move at different levels; high / medium / low,
- Mirroring each other / copy each other.

The reflection between the exercises is very important. Here the participant can share how they experience things and come up with ideas for what to change and how to continue.

The Eurhythmics teacher's role

As a leader in this kind of work I must prepare very well. I need to know the music and I need to find several ideas on how to work.

During the workshop I need to be open and receptive to the group and their needs. They must themselves do the interpretation. I give input and ideas of how to work, but in the end, it is their performance.

Itumeleng Maphakela – flute

Itumeleng was at the end of his master studies when he chose to get some individual classes in Eurhythmics. One of the things he wanted to focus on was the piece he was working on with his flute teacher, Mozart Flute Concerto in D major. We started working on expressing the flute part with movement in different ways. Very soon we realized that he had focused so much on the flute, but he was not so much aware of what happened in the orchestra.

We changed the focus into exploring the orchestra part. And as a help for this we used a recording. Itumeleng moved to the orchestra in various ways. We tried different objects, and he chose to use a drumstick. He said that he felt he could both draw lines with it and make distinct rhythms. The little round ball end of the stick helped him to get a 'focus point'.

One exercise that he was working on very hard was to follow the low strings with walking and the higher strings with the drumstick. This way he memorized the whole piece.

Later he played with a pianist, and as preparation for this he first moved to the piano part, then walked around to the piano while playing the flute. This gave him a good understanding

for what happened in the piano/orchestra, and after this work he could performed in a much better way.

He describes it this way:

- Those exercises have helped me to be a lot more sensitive,
- Now I know the piece better,
- I know more what is happening in the accompaniment,
- It is a sense of direction,
- I am more aware.