

**Music, Education and Me;  
A Study of Self in Musical Performance**



**Master-thesis**

**ICT in Learning – Music Profile**

**Stord/Haugesund University College**

**November 2013**

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## **Preface**

I owe my thanks to so many people  
For all the things they gave and did  
I cannot mention them all by name  
But please remember; I don't forget, I never will  
I'm always grateful, forever  
I'd never gotten here without you all  
The support and love, patience and comfort  
Maybe most of all; your strong belief  
That I could try this reverie  
I had it in me, but did I know?  
I took the steps, and faltered some  
Grateful I am  
Happy, not sad  
Now let's celebrate, all what we have

Thank you!

To my supervisor, mentor, teacher and guide: Professor Magne Espeland.

To my father, who never once failed to support: Oddvar H. Lien.

To my love, who stood by me all the way: Jostein Bøyum.

To my friends and colleagues for all their ideas, feedback, support and lots of fun: Kari Holdhus, Helge Haaland and Jonas Selås Olsen.

Stord, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

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## Abstract

This master-thesis is about the phenomenon of self in musical performance. The empirical basis for my project includes a first-hand study of my own performance as a jazz singer and in-depth interviews with two performing musicians and educators.

The study has a phenomenological-methodological perspective, and builds on theories of self and performance from psychology, phenomenology and aesthetics. Findings in the study suggest a three-dimensional model for the phenomenon of self in the context of musical performance; the General Self, the Personal Self and the Embodied self. Each of the three dimensions of self in musical performance appeared with a set of characteristics that constitute the different dimensions.

Based on my data I argue that what I have labelled the General Self in musical performance is characterized by multiplicity, on-going-self-evaluation, development and relational aspects. The Personal Self in musical performance seems to be characterized by a focus on me/authenticity and presence, and the Embodied Self by physical presence, bodily sensation and balance, as presented in the findings.

The three dimensions of self in musical performance are described, based on my interview data as well as transcriptions and analysis of my research videos and the rehearsal log. In the discussion of the findings the interaction between the three dimensions are described and presented as a model. The three dimensions are discussed in light of other theories of self.

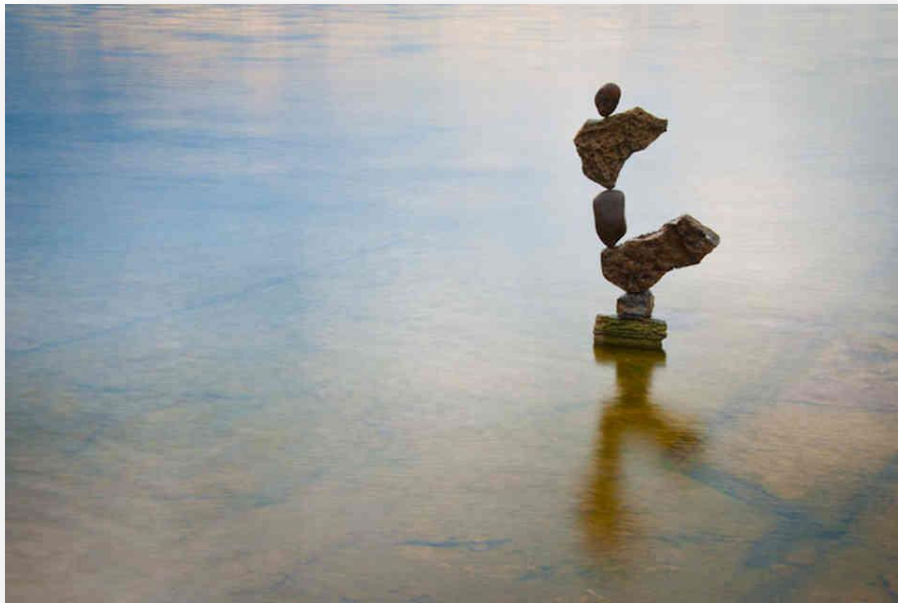
In the last chapter I discuss educational implications with the view to the implementation of educational practices focusing on bodily balance of self and awareness-training through an interdisciplinary approach that implies the use of improvisation as a teaching method as well as the development of a process-oriented attitude.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction



**If I tell you:  
I am song and dance  
Paint and poem  
Would you believe it's me?**

## **1.0 Introduction**

This master-thesis is about self in musical performance. It is a phenomenological study, and aiming to find grounding for a description of self in the specific context of music performance that can give us better understanding of how to develop good performances and better performance education. It is based on a first-hand study of my own performances; I apply a phenomenological descriptive research method.

My personal background is of relevance for my interest in studying self in musical performance. I was educated as a clinical psychologist in 1984 and had worked as a clinician and organizational psychologist for more than 20 years when I began my music education bachelor studies in 2008. My psychological orientation is towards the psychodynamic (Jung, 1969, Laing, 1971) and humanistic (Rogers, 1980) tradition, but I have never embraced this or any other traditions to the extent that I have been a “true” follower.

My music education began when I was 6 years old with piano-lessons. I took ballet-classes and joined a school choir and at the age of 15 I learned to play the guitar. In 2006 I attended a 4 month-course in vocal technique at Complete Vocal Institute (CVI) in Denmark, where I am currently enrolled as part-time student in a 3 year singer/teacher course. On graduation I will be authorized to teach Complete Vocal Technique, a teaching method developed by Catherine Sadolin and the institute.

### **1.1 The background for my study**

As a singer I am always confronted with a conflict of interest; I want to sing and perform, but I don't want to expose myself to being scrutinized by my audience. This conflict interests me, from an academic viewpoint. I sensed the same conflicting interest in many of my fellow students as a music education bachelor student, and I understood that this feeling or this conflict had little to do with the actual ability to perform. Many of my fellow students were wonderful musicians, but they still dreaded going on stage.

Psychologist might sometimes diagnose the internal battle I referred to above as performance anxiety, and it could have been a possible road to choose this perspective in my master-project, since I am educated as a psychologist too. Being a music teacher and knowing that all music teachers need to address this issue, I wanted to take a perspective that could be more constructive in an educational setting. I asked: Is it possible to understand this internal conflict in terms of the expressions of self in musical performance?

In asking that particular question we touch upon many fields; the understanding of art, the understanding of music and the understanding of the person doing the act of musical performing. My line of thoughts started as follows: I am the one performing, so how do I come into it? Does it matter who I am, and in what way does it matter? It lead me further into a line of thinking relating to my experience of performing; how do I experience being on stage?

My answer to the question above led to new questions; am I being preoccupied with how I am doing in terms of others' judgments or am I enjoying the singing and doing my best at the moment? And to what extent does the context of the performance influence my experience?

## **1.2 The Research Questions**

All the above mentioned questions have been the basis for the process of defining the research questions. This has been an ongoing process during the study.

My three questions for this research are:

1. What is it that sometimes makes us experience a performance as poignant and heartfelt? And what is the significance of *self* in such experience?
2. To what extent is *self* in music performance influenced by contextual elements, like technology, stage settings, audience etc.? And how can this influence be analysed and described?
3. How can our understanding and awareness of *self* in performance be relevant for music education practices?



### **1.3 The Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis has 6 chapters. In Chapter 2 I present relevant literature and research in the fields of self and performance, with a section on the voice and emotions at the end of the chapter. Chapter 3 is a Methodology and Research Design chapter. The phenomenological perspective on research is presented with the specific method I have applied in this study. There is a separate section on the research design, where the videos are presented in some detail.

In Chapter 4 I present the findings of the study. This is the main chapter of this thesis, where I propose three dimensions of the phenomenon of self in musical performance with grounding from my data. The discussion on the findings in relation to the theories applied in this study is presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 is about Educational Implications. In this chapter I present a didactic approach on how to use the findings in an educational setting.

### **1.3 A personal a note**

I always wanted to be a musician, but never told anyone and it seemed completely out of the question to me, as I was convinced I had no talent, and that talent was an absolute necessity. During my 6 years of studies in psychology I passed the Conservatory every day. In the beginning I enjoyed listening to the rehearsals, even though my heart bled; I so much wanted to be there, to be one of them. After a while I began to take a different route, to avoid the pain. Yes, I joined a choir, but that wasn't really what I wanted. I wanted to be the artist.

Throughout this presentation I have coloured the text with pictures and photos that are symbolic to the text, and small writings of my own in connection to the pictures. The pictures are either free downloads or bought photos. In the Appendix I have presented some of the artists or the background for the pictures. My motivation for this is of aesthetic character foremost, but it also represents me, as a person, as an expression of myself. I have been writing since childhood, poems, essays, texts and stories. These have never been publicly displayed. With this background it is of no wonder that my interest of self in musical performance had to have its redemption. I am truly so very pleased and proud that I am finally where I am supposed to be; I am the artist and I am one of "them".

## Chapter 2: Theory



**Who's to tell what's to be?**

**Things aren't always what they seem**

**Open to wonder and you might see**

**The feather is more than you would believe**

## 2.0 Theory

### 2.1 Introduction

In my search for literature and research on the concept of *self* in philosophy, psychology and education I had to ask myself: «what am I looking for, and what kind of theories can support my questions? » My research context is self in musical performance and not *self* in general, and my aim is to describe and understand the phenomenon of self in this specific context with a view to music education. I realized that my psychological background in many ways was less useful than I thought; my mind was set on the psychological understanding of self in the contexts I have been working in. Studying self in musical performance seems an altogether different matter, since the musical element or context in itself calls for a theoretical frame that is profoundly different from a therapeutic context or an organizational context. My choice has been to primarily look for literature on what self *is*; theories about the self as a concept more than the application of the concept in the different fields, but still try to keep it within the contextual frame of musical performance.

In search of relevant scientific literature and research for this study I found a surprisingly complex web of theories and yet to this point, none that really felt like “a match”. There are “bits and pieces, here and there”, but very little context specific descriptions of the phenomenon of *self* as such. I have chosen to present some of these “pieces”, knowing that the pieces are partly taken out of their original context and adjusted to my study. I am aware of the vast amount of writings on *self* in philosophy in general, and on the first-person-perspective of phenomenology in particular.

In my review of literature I have encountered a number of approaches to the concept of self and these are mostly of a general nature, referring to how consciousness manifests itself in the individual. Many different words are applied in the various descriptions of *self*, and there are many constructs involved; ego, identity, personality, true or false self, inner life, minimal self, self-knowledge, self-awareness, self-presentation etc.

In this chapter I present different theoretical views on the two main concepts used in my thesis: the *self* and *performance*. I also have a section on the voice in musical

performance. My approach to the concept of self is phenomenological and psychological. The two perspectives are interrelated; the concept has deep roots in philosophy and all human sciences. The concept of self is basic to our understanding of our lived lives; should we not refer to our selves, how then could we describe lived experience?

In the phenomenological literature, the words used in the descriptions and discussions are mostly like *being, being in the world, meaning, intention, lived experience, subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, first-hand perspective, consciousness, embodiment, minimal self*.

In the psychological literature we find a different set of words and concepts; *identity, ego, consciousness/unconsciousness, self-knowledge, multidimensionality, psyche, self-concepts, drive-theory*.

As I see it the two perspectives complement each other; this is supported by the fact that many researchers on the concept of self or self-related issues have perspectives from philosophy, phenomenology and psychology present in their theories (Gallagher, 2011, Marsh, 1990, Zahavi, 2000, Gergen, 2009).

With regard to the concept of performance I have chosen to focus on musical performance at stage. In this section I present the performance theories of Stanislavskij (1988) and Beyer (2013) and research connected to emotions in musical performance.

## **2.2 Phenomenological concepts of self**

The Self was introduced as an issue in philosophy by Descartes, with his famous quotation “Cogito ergo sum” (I think, therefore I am). His position was that self is autonomous; I realize that I exist. Since his time the concept of self has been studied and discussed from different perspectives within philosophy and other fields. In philosophy, the field of phenomenology appeared at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Modern phenomenology is grounded on the writings of Husserl, and further developed by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre (Finley, 2006, Van Manen, 1990).

Husserl's point of departure was life itself – how we actually live and experience the world, our perceptions of the world and of ourselves in relation to other people, the physical world around us and everything that this implies. He introduced the term “*intentionality*”, stating that people always are “headed somewhere” (Wertz, 2005) – strive towards something or somewhere, they have direction of some sort. He also said that the *lived experience* is vital for our perception of the world – we cannot free us from the lived life and its’ impact on our relations, experiences and understanding. Our greatest drive is to create meaningfulness in our lives. He introduced the term “lifeworld” (“*Lebenswelt*”) to describe this.

According to Husserl, scientific knowledge demands a fresh and unbiased description of the subject to be studied (Wertz, 2005), demanding one of two procedures he called epochè. Epochè are abstentions from influence, naming two; the abstention of previous scientific knowledge and the abstention of methodology. The abstentions will allow the researcher an attitude of naivety and reflection, both necessary to find new essences of the subject matter. The analysis following this procedure is a phenomenological psychological reduction; the experience described is purely psychological and is aimed at allowing the researcher to recollect her own experience and reflect on the lived world of other persons in order to create meaning as it is presented to the first-person.

Merleau-Ponty developed Husserl's theories, and his contribution on the body's significance in the experience of *being in the world*, the body being the basis for experience, has been fundamental in the development of phenomenology (Bowman, 2007, Finlay, 2006, Zahavi, 2005).

Finn Skårderud (1997) questions the psychological – and especially the psychoanalytic traditions' view of the body and argues that it is dualistic in its nature with a one-sided perspective on the historic body, in developmental-psychological terms. Skårderud points at Merleau-Ponty and argues for his understanding of the body as an “unreduced ambiguity” (Karterud & Monsen, 1997, p. 253); we can talk *about* the body and we can experience *with* the body, but they are in-separable. The body is a relation and

communication between “an un-reflected, spontaneous condition and a condition of a reflected, lived bodily level”.

Linda Finley (2006) also refers to Merleau-Ponty: “The body is the vehicle of being in the world» (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962, s. 62). She describes the practice of “reflexive bodily analysis”. She defines three distinct layers of body attention: bodily empathy, embodied self-awareness and embodied inter-subjectivity.

The philosopher and cognitive scientist Shaun Gallagher has edited *The Oxford Handbook of the Self* (2011). One of the contributors is Quassim Cassam (Gallagher, 2011) who writes about *The Embodied Self*. His point of departure is Descartes’ dualism, and his discussion is centered on the question of how we perceive our bodies; as an object, as a subject or both.

Phenomenological research has a first-hand perspective and thereby involves the self-concept as a starting point for all research. Zahavi (2005, p. 146) points out that there always is a minimum experience of self as an integrated part of any experience. His perspective is primarily the inter-subjective – he sees self in relation to others and argues that subjectivity is embodied and that it is only through this embodied subjectivity we can relate to others.

Heidegger (Inwood, 1997) introduced the term “Dasein” about the human *being*. He argues that there are many “beings”; all there is has a “being”, but the human *being* has to be the starting point of all inquiry, in both senses of the term. We *are* human beings and we are *being* human. The term “Dasein” refers to the subjective existence in the world. Michael Inwood (1997) writes in his short introduction to Heidegger: “Dasein’s way of being involves the capacity to choose among several possible ways of being.” In this sense we can infer that he is talking about a self, as a core existence in the world, which evolves in many dimensions or levels. Heidegger postulates that Dasein has an essential understanding of existence apriori and pre-conceptually, and that any experience is interpreted by Dasein according to its preconceptions.

Phenomenology offers a life philosophy, a way to understand what it *is* to be a living human being, as well as a perspective and an approach to science. In music education research phenomenology is much applied as there is a close link between

phenomenology and art. Phenomenology is about perception; how we look at things in the sense of perception that is more than what meets the eye.

Merleau-Ponty (2012) said we perceive through our body – we *are* a body as well as we *have* a body. Transferred into my lifeworld as a singer we can relate to this as for instance the muscular memory of the voice – we experience through our body and this experience leaves an imprint in our bodies. We create music through our bodies and we take the music into our bodies.

Rønholt, Holgersen, Fink-Jensen and Nielsen (2003) use the example of “taking a room into possession”. They exemplify by how a person possesses a room with more than just the physical presence; bodily, timely, psycho-socially – like for instance in the music-room.

The concept of lifeworld is not limited to the experience of living, but is related to the “very being” constituted through the body and by our intentionality (directedness).

In this study’s context *lifeworld* is what constitutes the musical performance; this actual situation, all there is in it and all that is brought into it: people, experience, culture, the music, the instruments, the building. Looking at musical performance with this perspective implies that musical performance – as all experience – has to be contextual and relational, as there is only one unique experience of each kind; my lifeworld is in constant change and development, every new minute is different from the previous.

Phenomenological perspectives have the focus of how the phenomena are presented to us in the first-person perspective. This study is about how the phenomenon of *self* presents itself to me as a first-person and how *other*’s first-person perspectives on the phenomenon present itself to me through the interviews.

### **2.3 Psychological concepts of self**

The concept of self as described in psychology is complex and there are many interpretations of the concept in different disciplines. In psychology we find the concept used in many sub-disciplines; psychoanalytic theory, psychodynamic theory, theories of personality, social psychology and developmental psychology.

In the developmental field we meet writers like Stern (2003) who claim that the self exists in the child long before any self-reflection or language is developed. To me, this implies the connection between *self* and *being*, as described by the phenomenologists presented above. The *self* is there from the very beginning of our existence.

Psychological understanding of the concept of self has strong links to philosophy; some take the positions that the psychological use of *self* is significantly different from and can be seen independent of its philosophical basis (Karterud & Monsen, 1997).

My first encounter with the concept of self was through philosophy at Upper Secondary School when I read about existentialism, notably Kirkegaard and Sartre. Later, this interest was strengthened through my studies of psychology. My experience was that the concept of self was remarkably absent and had little focus in psychological theories. In a recent thesis in psychology Steen points out the same and reflects on how this can be possible given the importance of *self* in a therapeutic context. (Steen, 2007)

In my psychology studies at the University of Bergen we were eclectically educated and this has strongly affected my professional life. I have never been quite familiar with the psychoanalytic basic belief that our psyche consists of different structures, such as Freud's id, ego and superego, (Freud, 1920/2013) but I have accepted that our psyche can be conscious or unconscious – or subconscious (depending on which traditions one refers to).

I was fascinated by Carl Jung's critique of Freud and his descriptions, and Jung's own description of self and the personal and collective unconsciousness. Jung separated the "I" and the "Self", and defines Self as an overall phenomenon that constitutes all of the human psyche, and the "I" as the active part of self that acts in relation to its environment (Jung, 1954).

In order to understand how psychology treats the concepts of self, we need to look at the different contexts that psychology operates in. Usually the concept of self is considered in the context of therapy; it is considered in relation to mental illness, dysfunctions or madness – depending on what historic time it refers to. Freud and Jung's descriptions were motivated by how to understand the mentally ill, and how to describe what happens to a person being mentally ill.



The therapeutic context is described also by Karterud and Monsen (1997) with reference to the Self-psychology that arose in the 1960-s and onward with Kohut as central in this development. Heinz Kohut (1913-1981) was an American psychoanalyst and is considered the founder of self-psychology from around 1970. He developed his theories over time, challenging Freud's scientific grounding of psychoanalysis.

According to Karterud and Monsen, Kohut's point of departure was close to the Jungian concept of *self*; the *self* must be understood as the sum of the individuals' self-representations. Kohut changed his view later, but his views are still basis for the fundamental understanding within self-psychology, that self is "(...) a coherent system independent of the conceptualizations of id, ego and superego with the associated drive-theories" (Karterud & Monsen, 1997). This concept is by many linked to *experience – or the experience of self*.

Inter-subjectivity is central in both phenomenological and psychological theories and most descriptions of *self* include a reference to "others". This study does not include the discussion on inter-subjectivity, but the relational aspect of the musical context (relations between the individual and the contexts) is being dealt with as well as the relational aspect of self in musical performance.

Gergen (2009) has developed a generative theory on the relational self. In this he challenge the traditional view of "self" as separate and autonomous individuals, and proposes that self is in nature relational; self *is* relations. He argues that the self is always in a relationship, even when alone, by symbolic interaction with our experience.

More recent theorist like Stolokow, Brandshaft and Atwood (referred in Karterud & Monsen, 1997) prefer the concept of the *multidimensional self*, with reference to inner processes or functions of the self. This is also found in Kohut's writings; he describes self as "a dynamic system with three poles" – the grandiose self, the twin-seeking self and the ideal-seeking self (Karterud & Monsen, 1997). This description was at first bipolar, without the twin-seeking self. The bipolar-model has a stronger foundation in today's reference to Kohut. According to Skårderud (1997) Kohut's grandiose self refers to our ambitions and the ideal-seeking self to our idealised parent-perception. The third concept of the twin-seeking self that he introduced later is our alter-ego.

The multidimensional perspective is continued in other parts of psychology by Herbert Marsh (1990, 1989, and 2006). His research has mostly a psychometric perspective; how to measure aspects of *self* in relation to academic - or sports achievements. He uses the term “the physical self -concept” and the “academic self –concept”, along with many other self-concepts (Marsh, 1990). His concepts of self are primarily linked to different experiences of *self* in connection with individual activities. My understanding is that his concepts of self are contextual; self in sports, self in academia etc.

Marsh points to the little research done on the self-concept as such; it is more used as a measurement variable in psychological research. He reflects on this:

Unlike many other areas, it is not studied primarily within the structure of any one discipline. Although many thousands of studies have examined self-concept, only a few researchers have published a significant number of studies or have conducted self-concept research over an extended period of time. (Marsh, 1990, p. 78)

And:

Self-concept is closely related to a variety of other self-constructs such as anxiety, motivation, self-attribution, and self-efficacy. An important task that has not been pursued sufficiently is to integrate the different self-related constructs into a unified theory of self. (Marsh, 1990, p. 97)

In the fields of sports, Stelter (1998) research the concepts of self in relation to movement. He defines a “body self” and argues that the body self is not a static dimension; it is the *felt* experience of the self. He understands *self* as relational, but even though he defines the body self as a dimension, he defines the *self* as a personal construction, an emotional-cognitive structure.

There is a link between the concept of self and the concept of identity. Even Ruud (1998) defines identity as “how the self reflects upon itself in different contexts (...) as the self-in-context”. To me his definition points at the *self* as dimensional; self reflects upon itself, as something to be seen from different perspectives, by one self. His definition could just as well have been related to *self*, as to identity. Ruud (1998, p. 3) reflects on *self* in connection to music: “Listening to, performing, and talking about

music is not as much a reflection of identity as a way of performing our sense of ourselves, our identities”. Ruud (1997) also refers to the different orientations within psychology, and argues that within humanistic psychology the term “*self*” is more often referred to as a core, an essence, the “me”.

The notion of a stable sense of *self* is supported by Zahavi (2005), as well as by Skårderud (1997). Ruud (1997, p. 46) also points to the disagreements on the concepts of “identity” – which he also defines as subjective and phenomenological “(...) as part of our inner, experienced attention to ourselves (...)”. This inner subjective core is sometimes referred to as “the true self” (Ruud, 1997).

Baumeister and Bushman (2014) define the self-concept as “a set of beliefs about oneself” and as equivalent to self-knowledge. This self-knowledge is one of three functions of self, the other two being interpersonal self (or public self) and the agent self or executive function. In their presentation of self they refer to many selves that are related to a number of different functions of self, like self-esteem, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-presentation, the looking-glass self, etc.. They do not treat self as one phenomenon and they do not define self in any specific context.

## **2.4 Musical Performance**

Godlovitch (1998, p. 1) propose a model of musical performance which “(...) comprises the complex network of relations linking together musicians, musical activities, works, listeners and performance communities”, pointing at three integrated factors in any musical performance; the compositions, the performer and the audience. He argues that musical performances are sound-productions through an agent – the instrument, and thus defines a fourth factor in the musical performance. In his philosophical study of musical performance he claims there are 4 aspects of agency involved; causation, intention, skill and intended audience. In defining the intended audience as a necessary ingredient in a musical performance he rejects the rehearsal as a performance, but admits the possibility of a projection of an audience; the performer can imagine the intended audience. His context is primarily the traditional western classical music, but I will argue that these factors also can be applied to any other musical context.

The relation between a performer, the stage and the audience is described in the field of drama and acting. Konstantin Stanislavskij is one of the most important contributors in actor education, and his work has strongly influenced almost every actor and performer in modern times. Stanislavskij (1988) introduces some key points that are very interesting for my investigation of the *self*.

Stanislavskij's main focus was that acting is all about *empathy*; the actors need to be *immersed* in the role. As opposed to the then traditional ways of acting with masks and stylistic approaches to emotional display, he said that the *emotions* had to be real in the sense that they were credible. His system for acting is often called "the Method". He stated that the actors need to *feel* the role characters emotions. One of the terms he uses is Creative Attention. I understand this as the attention required of the performer (actor, in his case) to the actual work being done on stage and not attention directed towards the audience; if you have your attention on the viewer (audience) then you lose the attention to yourself and what you're doing. Living the role on stage demands full attention on the role; in the minute one shifts attention to the audience one becomes an onlooker and the role can slip (Stanislavskij, 1988).

I recognize the following from psychology; we cannot watch ourselves as if from the outside and at the same time be attentive to our own center, ourselves. Mindfulness training (Kabat-Zinn, 2013) is a method many therapists use for reducing anxiety and depressions, where the focus is on attentive presence.

In traditional western acting, there's usually a script, a story to be told and dramatic progress to be revealed. For a singer, this is also true – though no one else has written a script except for the lyrics. It is our interpretation of the song that becomes the script and the drama comes from the way we communicate through the music, the dynamics of the song. An actor has partners on stage with roles to interact with, whether imaginary or real. Does the singer and musicians look upon themselves as partners in drama? The answer to that question is depending on the view the singer and musicians have of performance and the concert as such.

In my own education at Complete Vocal Institute (Sadolin, 2012) we learn about interpretation in singing. This is based on the Method by Stanislavskij (1988) and is founded on the presumption that the song is being performed for some reason; there is a message in there somewhere, but the singer has to decide what this message is. The singer must decide how to relate to the music and to the relation between the music and the lyrics.

According to Sadolin the trick is to decide on the questions of WHO sings, WHAT is the message, WHERE is the stage, WHEN is this being said, and WHY does this figure sing this song (Sadolin, 2012). This can be related to Godlovitch's concepts of "intention" and "causations", as referred above.

The Sadolin method described above is based on Stanislavskij, and is about taking on a role, but not as an actor as such. It is inner work – a work the singer has to do with herself, in order to personalize the performance without being private. The argument is that it is of no general interest for the audience to listen to your private feelings or story, but to listen to something they can relate to as relevant for themselves. The performance requires a story with elements of projective material; the singers' projection of a sentiment or a feeling or story will be received in an interactive state of mind by the audience. The projective element is also supported by Bud Beyer's concept of "completing the circle" (Beyer, 2013).

We can see a connection here to Stanislavskij writing about imagination; one needs to have empathy to be able to imagine the situation and the role set for stage. It is this imagining process that constitutes the credibility of the performance (Stanislavskij, 1988, p. 122-123). It is not enough just to play the role and try to display meaning; one needs to have creative presence or attention to oneself.

Bud Beyer argues in his book "Completing the circle" (2013) that a performance should be an *emotional* experience between the musicians and the audience; a journey on the bow of the circle. He points at the theatre for methods to teach musicians the art of performance with an emotional message. In his experience these topics are rarely in the curriculum of music education.

Stanislavskij and Beyer both point to emotionality in performance: Stanislavskij by creative attention and immersion, and Beyer by defining the emotional message as vital in any performance. Torill Vist (2009) has done research on how music can enhance or create knowledge of feelings, and points to music experience as a mediating tool for “feeling-knowledge” or “emotion-knowledge”. She argues that emotional availability and consciousness is separated from the emotional understanding. She explains the separation by the process of meaning created by the bodily and intellectual activity necessary for the emotional understanding. My understanding of Vist’s point of view is that the bodily processes and the conceptualization of the processes are simultaneous and interactive; she defines emotional understanding as “(...) the formation of meaning, holistic and coherent depth-knowledge as a form of insight in emotional processes and expressions” (2009, p. 28). Vist’s use of the term “insight” refers to “self-understanding”; to know and understand one self, to have insight in ones’ own emotional reactions (Vist, 2009, p. 29).

David Best (1992) argues in his book “The Rationality of Feeling” that *feelings* play a central role in the creation and appreciation of art and that these feeling involve understanding or cognition. His point of view is that feeling is rational in the sense that cognition is an affordance of emotionality; emotions are not bodily sensations as such, it is a feeling *directed* at something. He denotes the *particular* characteristic of artistic feeling, describing its uniqueness and how art experience never can be repeated. This can be related to the phenomenological concept of intentionality.

Beyer uses the word *projection* in his descriptions of how the musicians must connect to the audience. Projection can be emotional or visual; in David Best terms it would be a particular feeling connected to the artistic expressions.

## **2.5 The Voice in Musical Performance**

I am a vocalist, a jazz-singer, and my voice is my instrument in musical performance. The voice is a special instrument; its human, muscular and *within*, and part of our body. Instrumentalists use their bodies to play, but the instrument is *outside* of their body, something they can hold or sit by. This makes the voice as instrument unique in comparison.

Everyone use their voice to speak, unless there is a deficiency to the vocal chords or other vital parts of the larynx. The voice as instrument is universal, as it is also an instrument for speech. Making music with the voice is on the other hand a specialized use of the voice, and even though most people sing it still requires a minimum of vocal technique to be able to produce the notes; there has to be control of breath and coordination of breath-release and minute muscular movements in the whole body. (Schei, 2011, Sadolin, 2012, Welch 2005).

Welch (2005) and Vist (2009) point at the emotional aspect of singing. Welch refers to studies showing that emotions are revealed through the voice for others to intercept, and therefore constitutes what he calls *emotional capital*. Tiri Bergesen Schei (1998) researching three professional singers' experience of their voice, points out that many people are ashamed of their voices. In her thesis she elaborates on this and calls it "voice-shame"; exposure of the voice in public or to unknown people – even to close family – can trigger a feeling of shame.

Shame is a deep-rooted emotion connected to the being, as opposed to guilt which is directed at something we've done. Skårderud (1997) argues that shame is closely linked to the self, and the exposure of self.

One of Schei's conclusions is that shame is counterproductive for a singer and has to be addressed in the educational setting as something the vocal teacher must work with. She states that shame is culturally inherent in our society as a regulator of behaviour also. It is when the shame is connected to the voice that it must to be dealt with in the vocal lessons.

A recent psychological study on the phenomenology of shame supports this notions; shame can be a positive regulating emotion but can also be strongly inhibiting and a significant factor with regard to mental health (Matre, 2010). The positive regulating aspect of shame is connected to our sense of embarrassment; we do not want to embarrass others by fault, nor do we want to behave in a manner that can cause shame on others.

I would argue that singing is in itself an exposure of *self*, as it is our body that is producing the musical performance – our very being is exposed through our voice and

all it reveals of who we are at that moment. Schei (1998) argues that shame also is a regulator of self-control and group adjustment or conformity in relation to performance, vocal expressions and body. For a professional singer this would be connected to vocal interpretations of music and stage-behaviour, just to mention two culturally defined areas within musical performance.

She writes (my translation):

The informants relates to the danger of shame by continuously adjusting to the norms of the genre of jazz, classical and pop. Embarrassment, stage fright, nausea and diarrhea are disguised shame, or anxiety for the shame that lures in a failure. The threat of shame forces an active adjustment to stereotypes like “the classical singer”, “the pop-singer” or “the jazz singer” – an adjustment to traditions, singing-styles, phrasing and artistic expressions. The normative patterns of cultural heritage, standards and rules are being exposed through the singers’ style. (Schei, 2011, p. 96)

The Danish Vocal teacher, Susanna Eken (1998) takes a psychological and developmental point of view on vocal teaching and calls singing a “natural extension of personality” (Eken, 1998, p. 27). She emphasizes the importance of early emotional experience in relation to anxiety, aggression and tensions, and points at how anxiety is revealed in vocal expressions.

My most important reference with regard to phenomenological research on singing performance is Susanna Leijonhufvud's dissertation on the Experience of Singing (2011). Singing with other people is her context, though not necessarily to “an audience”. To her, singing with others is also singing along with a CD or YouTube Video on her own.

Leijonhufvud’s analysis of the singing experience provides a description of the constitution of the phenomenon of singing. The general essence is described as “a musical vocal confirmation of my existence in the world” (Leijonhufvud, 2011). This provides a link to the concept of self in performance, by the fact that her point of



departure is the experience that some people sing freely and enthusiastically out of tune, and not at all concerned by it.

## 2.6 Summary

The phenomenological view of *self* is not to be defined as *a view* as there are many approaches to the concept. I find two aspects or characteristics from the phenomenological theories of interest for this study; that of *embodiment* and that of *being in the world*. Embodiment is to me the *being in the body* as well as the *having the body* through which we experience or perceive all interaction in our lives; the internal processes of emotion and cognition as well as the relational processes to other bodies. *Being in the world* is to me our pure existence, linked to the core of ourselves.

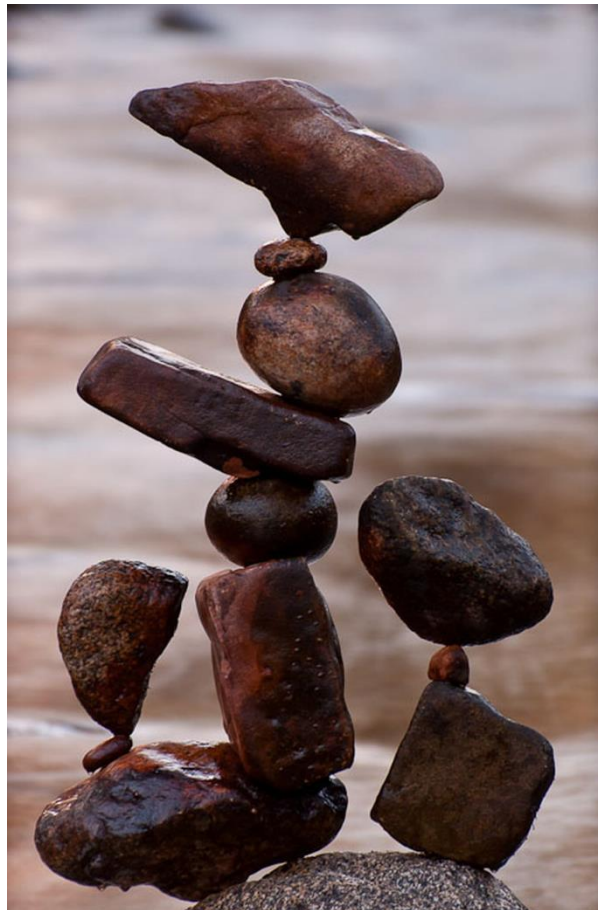
The many differing psychological views of the concept of self underlines the complexity of the concept, and as in the phenomenological theories, there is no *one view* of *self* in psychology. The characteristics I find interesting from the psychological theories for this study are connected to the descriptions of “inner core”, “experience of self” and multidimensionality.

At the start of my project I had the following description of my preconceptions of *self* and *performance*:

*Self* is/ has a core that is related to being in the world, our mere existence as individual human-beings. In our relations to others we develop a sense of identity connected to *what* we are; sex, age, nationality, cultural background, education etc. As we gradually become more and more experienced in our lives after birth we also gain a sense *who* we are; what we like to do, how we react to our environments, how our interest develop etc., and this sense is strongly relational; we develop an “ego” that we connect to how we are being perceived and how we wish to be perceived by others. It is this “ego” that seeks confirmation, consolation, challenge and achievement, to mention some of the relational aspects of a life. Our “selves” are our core existence, the very being that we connect to in introspection through meditation and relaxation. My *self* is my “Being ME” that never changes, and everything that makes me unique in every sense. Our body is ME as ME is my body; I resent a dualistic perspective

on body and mind; our emotions are bodily, and our sensations are bodily as an expression of living. The body can never really cease to exist except through death. In musical performance, it is not only the one or the other part of me at work; my existence on stage can be frightful if my ego is “making noise”, seeking confirmation from others, but being present in the music will allow my core existence to be adequately present and the body will reveal everything I know at that point about this music that I am singing. To me, performance is my communication of my lived experience and my emotional and intellectual understanding of the music, at that moment.

# Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design



**Bits and pieces found and savoured**

**Who's to know what fits in favour?**

**Complex puzzle, many choices**

**Trial and error, that's my posture**

## 3.0 Methodology and Research Design

The phenomenological perspective I have in my study has implications for the methodology of the research. The nature of the study's subject matter is phenomenological; the phenomenon of self in musical performance. Also, the subject of *self* is in itself phenomenological, and many phenomenologists address this subject in one way or another.

In this chapter I discuss some aspects of qualitative research, describe the phenomenological method applied and the research design for this study.

### 3.1 Qualitative research

In a lecture at Stord Haugesund University College Liora Bresler (Bresler, 2013) claimed that “qualitative studies in its nature is arts-based, in that it draws on aesthetic qualities”. She justified this by listing the basic assumptions innate in qualitative research. There are especially two things she mentioned that I found very interesting for this study; namely that context shapes meaning making and that the researcher is always situated. To me, this is meaningful and in accordance with my own experience of the world both as a psychologist and as educator. She also argued that social reality is constructed, multiple and perspectival.

In her talk she also emphasized that the goals for qualitative research are expansion of meaning and not causality as in quantitative research, and that it seeks empathic understanding of life lived or lived experience. As I will point out later, this also in line with the Stanislavskij method of acting (Stanislavskij, 1988), which is relevant for understanding performance on stage. Another of her points, referring to Geertz (Geertz, 1973) came up in one of the interviews; qualitative research should enable conversation. We need language to talk about complex realities. This is supported by Van Manen (1990) who writes about hermeneutic phenomenological writing. He argues that human science research *is* a form of writing (Van Manen, 1990, p. 111), and that creating the text is the object of the research process.

### 3.2 Phenomenological method

Research on musical performance is found in several disciplines, from psychology and pedagogy to aesthetics and philosophy. The same applies also for research on self as a concept. The nature of this study requires a qualitative phenomenological and hermeneutic approach. As a basis for my work I have taken the view of van Manen (1990) that states that art is in itself hermeneutic; art is perceived and understood in a context and this implies an interpretation.

In Max van Manen's book «Researching Lived Experience» (1990) he states that “Phenomenological research is the study of lived experience” (p. 9) – or “the study of the lifeworld”. He states further that the core question is “What is this or that kind of experience like?” This question refers to the phenomenon of the experience, as they are being presented to us in our consciousness.

In this study the *experience* to be studied is *the phenomenon of self* in the context of musical performance. According to Van Manen such studies have to be retrospective; it must be studied after the experience has been made in order to be able to reflect on the lived experience. This implies that studying *self* in musical performance cannot be done while performing and must therefore be reflected on after the performance.

Phenomenology aims at “making explicit and seeking universal meaning” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 19). This means that doing a phenomenological study should lead to descriptions that are meaningful and universal; others should be able to understand what is meant by the description and should be able to relate to the description.

*Meaning* in the phenomenological sense is closely linked to intentionality, the meanings-constructing directedness, described by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. A phenomenological description of a phenomenon constitutes the intentional connection between the expression and the meaning of the expression (Holgersen, 2002).

Giorgi (2012) has developed a descriptive phenomenological psychological procedure that is applicable in my study. He describes (2012, p. 5) the necessity of assuming a correct attitude of phenomenological reduction and psychological perspective before analysing. An attitude of phenomenological reduction implies an awareness of one's preconceptions, as I have presented in the previous chapter. This procedure has 5 steps:

- a) Reading the entire description to get a sense of the whole
- b) Rereading the descriptions, this time to mark units of meaning or shifts of meaning in connection to the phenomenon of interest – in this case the phenomenon of *self*
- c) Reflecting on the meaning units – to look for revelations of the phenomenon or relevant insights to the research of the phenomenon, by using free imaginative variation
- d) Reviewing the direct and psychologically sensitive expressions and write an essential structure of the experience by use of free imaginative variation
- e) The raw data are then clarified and structured by use of the essential structures written in the previous procedure

I have used Giorgi's steps in this research, but adapted it to my context and situation. A result of this work has been that I have experienced a learning process and a new understanding of the field investigated.

In my analysis of data in this research I need a critical view on myself as researcher and interviewer. Van Manen (1990) points at the problem of language and to the necessity of being sensitive to the undertones of language, this is of importance in the hermeneutic process of making meaning of interviews and transcripts. He also emphasize the research aim of making meaning of lived experience, and point at the fact that the researcher "borrows" other's experience in order to get a better understanding of and thus deeper meaning of the lived experience in the context.

In my case, there is a language barrier that needs to be addressed. Though I had English as second language in childhood, I am well aware of the possible misunderstanding and source of error that comes from translating from one language to another. In this study I must also take into consideration that the question of *self* in the context of musical performance in itself may be considered a source of error due to the subjectivity of the described experiences. Zahavi (2005, p. 156) address the question of subjectivity and refers to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty stating the following:

(...) my encounter with the other, my ability to interact with and recognize another embodied subject as a foreign subjectivity, is pre-empted by and made possible through the very structure of my own embodied subjectivity.

I have to the best of my knowledge applied the method of “bracketing” in my analysis – the process of setting aside my own preconceptions of the phenomenon. Even though, it must be acknowledged that I might have influenced the interview situations by my previous knowledge.

With regard to the transcripts and reflections on the video, I must acknowledge that I am describing my own experience and thus the source of error is connected to my perceptive abilities as well as my reflecting abilities. In the process of viewing the videos I had many viewings before I was able to “bracket” my initial understanding of the experience. This resulted in new understanding of the experience and enriched the study.

### **3.3 Research Design**

In this section I present the design of my study. I presented my research questions in the Chapter 1 and the phenomenological method approach in the previous section.

A first-hand study of my own musical performance is the study’s main focus.

In order to strengthen the data for my purpose, I decided on two interviews of music-performers, to see if they in some way could mirror my own experience or add other aspects of understanding and experience to my study.

My empirical data are:

1. A research log during the preparation period and reflections after performing
2. Video observations of myself performing
3. Interviews with 2 persons, both performing artist and educators

In choosing to study my own performances and its preparatory process I had to decide my focus. Should I have several different performances, with different repertoire and different context, or should I have one or more concerts with the same repertoire in different contexts – or even perhaps try to do the same concert twice in the (almost)

same context? My choice was to keep it simple; I wanted to tape *one* specific full concert. As it happened my mother died and I had to change my plans. I ended up with taping 3 different performance situations; one Big band concert, one rehearsal for a trio concert and one duo performance with a pianist at CVI in Denmark. I wrote a research log for the whole period, including rehearsal and preparations, and my performances were videotaped.

For my interviews I used two audio-recorders; one Audio M digital recorder with a separate microphone and my iPhone. I downloaded the recordings into a program called Amazing Slow-downer, a transcription program for music, originally but extremely useful for interview transcriptions. The program allows a reduced speed without change of pitch, though there is also a pitch regulator. I looped a sequence of a minute or two and used a speed to match my typing. I transcribed both interviews in full.

For the videos I had to borrow a camera for the Big Band concert and the rehearsal session, but I used my iPhone for the third video from the concert in Copenhagen. I loaded the videos to my mac computer.

### **3.3.1 The Research Log**

I wrote a research log from January to March 2013 in preparation for a concert that was to be held on March 16<sup>th</sup>. As it happened, I also had a Big Band concert on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The concert on March 16<sup>th</sup> had to be cancelled for personal reasons.

I did not use video in this part of my data collection. Writing a log is like writing a diary, I tried not to decide what to write but rather make notes on the day of the things I was thinking, feeling and experiencing with regard to my preparations for the concert I was having. I had my research question at the back of my head. I did not write every day, but I have altogether 20 days of writing during those almost 3 months.



In preparing for the concert and the study I had this structure lined upfront:

- a. The preparation
  - a. Choosing the repertoire
  - b. Asking and agreeing with musicians
  - c. Rehearsal: the songs (text and melody, rhythm, style), the arrangement/form, improvisations etc.
  - d. Deciding the time and place.
- b. Inviting an audience
- c. Facilitation of the stage on concert day
  - a. Getting the instruments and gear
  - b. Trying out the sound, if not acoustic
  - c. Placing chairs
- d. Having the concert
  - a. Welcoming the audience
  - b. Presentation of the songs
  - c. Doing the songs
  - d. Receiving response from the audience
- e. Reflecting and learning from the experience

In the reflections I did during this process I asked some of the following questions:

- Why do I choose these particular songs? In what way has it to do with my *Self*?
- What are my choices for the setting of the concert? How does it reflect on my *Self*?
- How do the process and context and my co-musicians influence the concert and does that in any way affect my (sense of) *self* in the situation?

### 3.3.2 The Videos

I have 3 videos with footage of my own performances. Two videos are from concerts and one video is from a rehearsal in preparation for a concert to be. Each of the videos is described briefly below as an illustration of the contents and some of my reflections and interpretations when watching the videos. This came about as a result of a course I attended on “Writing with Video” with Kimber Andrews from the University of Illinois in August 2013.

#### Video 1: The rehearsal

In this video I have footages of different lengths throughout half a day of rehearsing with the musicians, in preparation for a concert.

*The repertoire was mine; I had made the selection of songs to play, and also the keys we played in. All three of us are in the frame, and the camera is placed to the left of the three of us. That gives us a sideways view of the interaction and the playing. I am rarely seen in front. There are some interesting aspects of this that has to do with how we stand in the room. The pianist is by the grand piano, which has been turned so he can see the bass player, but the bass player is standing between me and the pianist, so I can hardly see him when he is playing. In the beginning the bass player is also standing with his back to me, but in the end we have moved and are facing each other, more.*

*It is natural to interpret this as an aspect of the context that must have made an impact on the performances. We are three people who hardly know each other, I had met the pianist once and the bass player a few times, but the other two had never met.*

*In my profession as a psychologist I know too well that this situation should call for some kind of icebreaking, getting to know each other, finding a common place to interact in. I don't know why I didn't take that responsibility that day; I can only find a lot of excuses for it. However, I do see that this lack of responsibility for the context, for the situation we all were in, is an important responsibility to take for a performer having a soloist role, but also for any performers playing together, whatever the art is. Collaboration and communication is vital for the artistic output. Making music is all about communication.*

*So, also in making a choice for footage this aspect of the context should have been considered. One of the conclusions to draw from this is that I should remember that self in musical performance is relational and contextual.*

## **Video 2: The Big Band Concert**

In this video I have footage of the whole Big Band concert, where I had 3 songs to sing. The first was the second song of the concert, the next was in the middle and the third was the last song of the concert.

*The camera was placed in the back of the hall, side by side with the sound engineer. At first it took in the whole Big Band, but this being a fixed position with no one to work at it, I changed the focus so it was on me only. In that frame I had two and a half other musicians – I can see only part of a saxophone player to my left, a bass player behind me and the pianist to my right, a little behind.*

*I get into the frame when I step up on stage. The stage is a little higher than the floor where the audience is, but they are not seen in the video. I get up and leave for every song I sing.*

*The frame does not include my feet and the footage is rather dark.*

*The setting for this performance is that the Big Band takes up all the space in the stage – there is actually not enough room for other soloist players and the Vibraphone instrument that is in the concert. The space I have to stand on is less than half a square meter – I can hardly move, and my microphone stand has to be on the floor beneath me.*

*This was an aspect of the context that I did not consider before we arrived at the venue. Singing with a Big Band is in itself a challenge, and this being an amateur band (though with reinforcing musicians) the volume of their playing tends to be very high and the dynamics more or less absent or at least not well developed in the band. I was of course nervous – this was a prestigious gig for the band, at a nationally large Jazz Festival.*

*Only after watching all the videos and also actually after watching a television program where singers competed in Big Band singing, did I realize that the stage has also a great impact on the performance in a way I didn't put words to earlier. When I watched the program and listened to the supervisions the singers had before they went on stage,*

*I understood that doing a Big Band concert demand a stage to move on. The whole genre requires drama and stage performance. In my performance I was crammed in a small space; I had no idea if the audience could see me at all, most of them where placed to the left or the right of the stage (though a few were in front also). Analysing this video in search of self in musical performance becomes almost comic; the performance becomes an exercise in competing for the space both physically and vocally.*

### **Video 3: The Denmark Concert**

The third video is from a concert held in Copenhagen at my school there, Complete Vocal Institute. They have private concerts very regularly, and each singer is asked to sing one song.

*This footage is taken with an iPhone. The room is darkened, with colored stage lights. The stage is on the floor, and there is only a pianist and myself. A person is holding the phone, and has also moved it around a bit for footage of the audience.*

*I am in the frame, mostly, my whole body, and my feet on the floor. The face is a bit blurred from the darkness of the room and there is no zooming in the footage.*

*This situation is an intimate concert for the staff and other singers attending the schools. One could say that we are among friends – and perhaps some would say critical friends, since we all attend there to become better singers and teachers. The audience is attentive and quiet.*

### **3.3.3 My use of videos**

My original intention was to use only video material for my research by taping my own performance through a whole concert. As usual in research, things didn't work out the way I intended, but I got 3 videos of myself performing, 2 in concert and 1 in rehearsal, though none through a whole concert. This has in many ways given me a better material to analyse because I now had several contexts to consider.

The idea was to film myself only – with focus on me and my body and not on other people or the room itself. I was looking for an expression, or behaviour or anything not

known to me that could give me some idea of how the *Self* presents itself, or is presented, in a musical performance. My assessment of the situation in advance was that having others in the frame would interfere – and also would demand some kind of interpretation. The context is in itself of importance with all that is in it, not only the single performance of the character (me) being analysed.

My understanding of how to use a video has changed during the past months of this work. I realize that making a video recording for research purpose resembles a *documentary*, in that one needs to know what one is looking for.

Barry Hampe (1997), a documentary producer, points out the simple truth about a documentary; you need to know what you're looking for and you need good footage. He further argues that "The camera won't do it for you", pointing out that one must have a plan. It's as simple as that, and yet not so simple. I did have a plan for my video, but I had no understanding of how to get footage that could capture what I was looking for. Hampe distinguish two types of documentary genres; the "hot", here-and-now shot, and the fully scripted re-enactments or re-creations. My videos are "hot-shots" – I have taped the performances as they were there and then. It is a video of behaviour, but without the good documentary images that could have been if someone behind the camera had a plan for what to look for.

When there is a camera on us we tend to be self-aware, and Hampe describes how he tries to put up an invisible wall between the camera crew and people being filmed. This invisible wall is something I can relate to as *not* present, especially in the recording of the rehearsal. I was well aware of the camera and of my own personal state that day – my mother died the same morning. Is the footage then a true picture of the behaviour - or the performance - that day? The same applies for the other two; I knew where the camera was, I knew I was aiming for footage to use in this research. Is there any way that we can assume that what we see in the frame is analog to what really happened? Hampe says: «When we photograph people, we record behaviour, not personality» (1997, p. 41). The emotions or the personalities are something that must be inferred and what you get is always the result of a series of decisions being made.

In my documentations of my performances I had a plan, and an idea, but I was ignorant to the possibilities of planning more in detail what I was aiming for. I could have used

two cameras, I could have had someone behind the camera, and I could have decided to do footage of the whole setting and not only with myself in the frame. On the other hand, Hampe points at the experience, that what you can see or feel when you're in a room does not necessarily come through in footage. In terms of a performance it could be random whether or not a person behind the camera would capture any relations between me as performer and other people in the context (musicians or audience).

This is the reason why I have shared more of my reflections on the videos that I first intended. My own understanding of or interpretation of the footage is actually necessary in order to extract findings with regard to my research questions. As it turned out the videos does not meet the criteria for a documentary as such, but it does have behaviour in the frame that would not be revealed without the footage; the audio recordings alone would not be adequate to tell what actually happened in terms of self in musical performance. In this sense, the videos are documentations and can therefore be used in this context.

### **3.3.4 The Interviews**

The process of finding interview informants was a so-called “snowball sampling” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This method implies a process of identifying members of the phenomenal group - in this case it is “musical performers”. I decided on professional musical performers, and began making a list and talking to people, asking how they would feel to be asked to do an interview on self in musical performance. The next step in a snowball sampling is to identify others through the first group; I asked the musicians I talked to for names of people who could be interested. During this process I expanded my definition of the phenomenal group to include professional performers that have teaching experience or work as educators. When the names of my two informants came up, I asked them for an interview and did the interview at first available time. Both of the interview informants are in addition to being musical performers, also educators in the field of music.

A qualitative research interview aims to understand the interviewee perception of the world. In the specific phenomenological interview the aim is to get a description of how the interview experience phenomena in his/her lifeworld, with a focus on their

interpretations of the meaning with/of the phenomenon (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). A phenomenological interview is close to an ordinary conversation, but is a semi-structured conversation guided by the interviewer's predefined topics or question-suggestions.

My initial thought for the interview was to have them talk freely about their conceptions of self, but I decided to ask the first research question, and then have an open-ended in-depth interview on what followed. I kept my follow-up questions as closely as possible to what they were saying, but had agreed with both that it was my responsibility to "keep us on track". The interviews were conducted in their respective offices and we were undisturbed during the interview. Both informants spent one hour with me that started with this question: *What significance has self on a musical performance?*

Both interviews have been transcribed in full.

In the interviews both informants started by saying that this is a difficult concept. They talked about personas and roles – and the difference between honesty and dishonesty in expressions. I tried not to say anything about my own preconceptions of the concept or the phenomenon, and started the interviews by reading the first research question. The interview went well, and I had the experience of meeting people who not only could understand my questions but also enriched to the study by their involvement. The interviews were very interesting to me and they both opened my mind to my research, giving me insights and words to use, and perspectives to take.

In this presentation of the findings I am referring to my data in the following manner:

<b>Video 1 transcript:</b>	The Rehearsal Video
<b>Video 1 reflection:</b>	Reflections watching the rehearsal video
<b>Personal rehearsal log:</b>	From January to March 2013 in connection with rehearsal
<b>Video 2 transcripts:</b>	The Vossa-jazz video
<b>Video 2 reflections:</b>	Reflection on watching the Vossa-jazz video
<b>Video 3 transcripts:</b>	The Denmark Concert video
<b>Video 3 reflections:</b>	Reflections on watching the Denmark video
<b>Interview informant 1:</b>	Anonymous
<b>Interview informant 2:</b>	Anonymous

## Chapter 4: Findings



**Look what I found!**  
**Beautiful in my hand**  
**Save it for keeps, sweet**  
**Find one thing more**  
**Soon there is a collection**



## 4.0 Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

My findings are generated from a phenomenological study based on data from lived experience. All lived experience is contextual (Van Manen, 1990). My empirical context is musical performance in general, interview of performers/educators and specifically a first-hand study of my own performances singing jazz standards.

In my analysis of the data three dimensions of *self* came through as meaningful ways to categorize the findings:

- ❖ The General Self in Music Performance (GSP)
- ❖ The Personal Self in Music Performance (PSP)
- ❖ The Embodied Self in Music Performance (ESP)

My chosen categories build on my data as well as on theories about *self* (see Chapter 2). In my approach categories are contextualized in music performance.

In the following I describe the three dimensions of self in performance based on and justified by findings in my data; interviews, transcripts of the videos with reflections and excerpts from my rehearsal log. As I will show later I find these dimensions useful in an educational context. The dimensions can be related to our everyday life experiences of how we use the term *self*.

Each dimension has a set of characteristics that became evident when I analysed the data and reflected on theory.

In the presentation of the findings the excerpts in italics are statements from the interview informant, directly from the transcripts. None of my follow-up questions are referred unless explicitly noted.

## 4.2 The General Self in Musical Performance

*It could be me, it could be you. The doubt we feel is common too.*



Unknown photographer

In my interviews my informants often refer to an understanding of self in performance as a role, as an identity issue or an ego issue, i.e. how you perceive yourself in relation to others. This is the way the concept of self often is used in daily life by everyone; we refer to ourselves as an entity different from others, being assessed

by others and being assessed by ourselves – as if we can look upon ourselves from the outside – be our own onlookers. We also take on other peoples' judgments or assessments into our own perception of ourselves (Baumeister & Bushman, 2014).

The concept of self is most usually used together with an adverb, such as self-efficacy or self-knowledge, self-perception, self-esteem, self-awareness etc. If we look at these more closely we will find that they all involve some kind of inner cognitive action that is at some point directed in a relation, a comparison or assessment/evaluation (Baumeister & Bushman, 2014 p. 78). They state: "Self-awareness is often unpleasant because people often compare themselves to high standards such as moral ideals for good behaviour or a fashion model's good looks".

In my study I find 4 characteristics that describe the General Self in musical performance (GSP) in this study; multiplicity, ongoing self-evaluation, development and relations.

### 1. Multiplicity

In my reflections on my performances (video transcripts 1, 2 and 3) I refer to "many selves" or different aspects of *self* and this suggest that the dimension has a character of multiplicity.

- *Looking at two of my videos we can see two different physical versions of me; in the Big Band concert I am formally dressed and wear makeup and smile a lot, a bit stiff smile; it's a big audience and its late night in a jazz-festival. In the video from Denmark I am bare-footed, no makeup, wearing a long summer-dress without sleeves; it's very informal. The way I sing is also different; not only is the context totally different but we can see how this affects the performance. In the Big Band concert I need to be loud and address an audience at a distance, in the Denmark concert the audience is at the same level, very close, and it's intimate and quiet, with just a pianist.*

(Video reflections on both Video 2 and 3)

The video-excerpts I am referring to above show different versions of me in performances; seemingly connected to different contextual frameworks, such as formal/informal, Big Band/duo and the audience. The following excerpts from my interview of informant 1 support this notion:

- *I would say there are many selves.*
- *... we're talking about different versions...*
- *... the self of me when I was 15 is different to the self of me at now – so we're constantly in process – so it's... I think for Me, personally - the self is only ever a kind of snapshot - it's a moment, isn't it - of what we are*
- *Because, actually - what is self, in performing. People have different versions of themselves in performance – they have a persona – very often, and that can relate to their real self – it does relate to their real self, but it's a version of it –*
- *I want you to collect a lot of things that represent what you want to be in this moment, - not what you are, full stop, but what you are when you are performing (in reference to a workshop)*
- *I have one versions of myself here with you, at work – persona –then I go home and I have a different version of myself there. All these different situations, you know...*

(Interview informant 1)

This multiplicity is explicitly described; as versions of our Selves or as personas, the latter referring to a social role or a character being played as actors. In musical

performance of classical music the persona is sometimes given by the piece, as in an opera, but in the genre of jazz it must usually be defined by the artist herself.

## 2. On-going self-evaluation

This characteristic is evident with regard to different aspects of my own musical performance. It is difficult observe self-evaluation directly in the videos of my performance, but in my reflections afterwards it becomes evident:

- *I felt embarrassed afterwards. I knew it wasn't bad, but I was too occupied with the flaws and the fact that I don't have the vocal control I am used to have...*  
(Video 3 reflections)
- *I had been in doubt what to do; I buried my mother the week before I was grieving and worried about my father. I felt that this grief had changed my voice – as all emotional reaction would – and I felt unsure about my voice control and my tensions, that I wasn't able to get rid of in a hurry.*
- *It can be heard in the voice that I am struggling to get loud enough and to sing the words in time. I grimace too – people can clearly see that I am struggling – I don't feel I handled the situation well.*  
(Video 2 reflections)

In the above excerpts we find expressions of a feeling of shame; I am embarrassed, I grimace. There is also the element of emotional revelation; I can hear my grief through my voice.

In the data from my personal rehearsal log I find three areas where self-evaluation is involved: Self-evaluation with regard to repertoire, confidence, and ambition:

- *Even if my repertoire is within jazz standards I keep wondering if I should not expand.*
- *I am struggling with my repertoire choice; I sing mostly jazz standards best, but I lack motivation. I wonder if I'd rather sing different types of songs, or if it's because I don't master the improvisation well enough. (personal rehearsal log)*
- *.. afraid to choose song I am tired of, afraid to choose songs that are too new*  
(Personal rehearsal log)

This self-evaluation of the repertoire or the doubt I am expressing is part my preparation work; I need to find a way into the music that makes it my own expression, and part of this are my choices of the music itself and the lyrics.

In preparations there is also an element of persuasion that has to do with my confidence to what I am able to present or achieve in my performance. This has to do with factors like my relation to the co-musicians as well as my perception of my abilities:

- *Thinking about the program, who to play with. I am feeling low in confidence, I am afraid to ask, afraid to make a fool of myself, seem pretentious, believing I am «somebody» etc. I realize there are many “demons” on my shoulder in form of negative thoughts that I need to spend energy to deal with.*
- *Have to tell myself I can do it.*
- *I managed to go (there) with strength and enough courage to stand it not to sing «perfect»*

(Personal rehearsal log)

The confidence referred to above is connected to another characteristic of this dimension of self that I have called ambition. The excerpt below shows that even though my confidence is being under pressure, I still have the ambition to do well:

- *I have to fight the demons during rehearsal; «you don't sing well, this is boring, you don't add anything to these songs, you don't keep the tempo, you don't even know bossa nova» etc. I WANT TO sing with energy tomorrow, be grounded, not withdraw vocally, and use what I know.*

(Personal rehearsal log)

This aspect of self-evaluation is also evident in the data from the interviews. Interview informant 2 is very explicit about ambition, which she/he describes as an “achievement focus” not only having to do with the technicalities of the performance, but also with a feeling of wanting to touch somebody.

- *True... then you have to ask, what is an achievement focus... an achievement focus can be ... the usual immediate understanding would be about technique, being brilliant and things like that .. but it is also an achievement if I have the feeling before I go on stage that I want to touch someone strongly – sort of – and if I made it, then I have achieved, and that too is a kind of achievement focus*  
(Interview informant 2)

What Interview informant 2 describes as achievement focus above seems to be linked to a performance with “minimal demand” as described below. If a “minimal demand” is not present, then it will “take the focus away”:

- *And I have – I do want to achieve. And then I want to... if I’m singing, improvising over difficult score sheet – if I can’t, if I sing too many wrong notes, simply, then it will be a ... I didn’t make the minimal demand, and it will take the focus away from creating something – create an expression, a mood or a form – it will take the focus away, at least for me – I become very un-concentrated about being present – and the audience will hear wrong notes, out of tune, so that.. Achievement.*  
(Interview informant 2)

My understanding of this is that the “minimal demand” referred to here is connected to skills; technical as well as musical skills in the genre. This can also be said to be linked with confidence; to doubt one’s skills as a singer can be said to be connected to the “minimal demands” of the genre.

Having an achievement focus on a minimal demand might also lead to a blockage. This excerpt is taken from the answer to a follow-up question on how the process of “viewing yourself in terms of how you achieve can influence the performance:

- *Absolutely – to be your own viewer... I know that feeling ... is important - it blocks – it’s often a block, and it’s not easy to leave when you’ve first got into a track ...*  
(Interview informant 2)

### 3. Development

The General Self in Performance (GSP) as extracted from my data also has an element of development in *self*, which can be said to be connected to an inner force or drive to evolve, learn and change in order to adapt to the world and our contexts. This characteristic has an aspect of drive and moving on. This can easily be observed in my transcript of the interview of informant 1 as well as in my personal rehearsal log:

- *... when you come up with one version of yourself, and you get stuck with that, in a music career, that can only get you so far – cause you have to be flexible - people have to evolve, we all have to evolve*  
(Interview informant 1)
- *I want to, I feel like it, it makes me happy – and I resist, find excuses, postpone, and explain it away. What is this drive? Is it about manifesting oneself through the artistic expression? I'm thinking about how painters feel; they can't bother, don't want to, but they HAVE to paint, paint, paint. The driving force is so strong but is not just experienced as positive.*  
(Personal rehearsal log)

These excerpts refer to a nonspecific drive or evolvment, not to any specific skill, though the first excerpt suggests that this evolvment is necessary for a musical career. It implies the necessity of change and development. In the interview this came up as an example of artists who keep the same musical profile over many years; in the interviewee's opinion this could result in a career stand-still.

### 4. The Relational

In musical performance the relations to the other musicians are considered to be essential. This also seems to be a characteristic of what I have labelled General Self in music performance (GSP) in this study. My findings suggest that our relations are not purely physical in the sense that we are relating as bodies on the same stage, but involve a personal engagement or involvement that has implications for the performance. At the same time we also have a relation to ourselves in the context. The two processes seem

to intertwine, but not always expressed in words. It can be experienced as emotional but also as a physical concentration or closeness.

In the videos of my performances the relational aspect is evident on several levels including musical listening as well as physical and emotional closeness. This is also commented on in the interview of informant 2:

- *When I notice where my listening is, that it's on the others – listening to own ideas, tell what I want to...*
- *... what's difficult to express... not forced, a thought, or studied or adjusted to a template ... what's left then is the spontaneous. And when I listen more to for instance those I am playing with ... and when I ... when I manage this, I feel I manage sometimes ... the minute I have sung a phrase, I manage to be in the phrase, and listen ahead.*

(Interview informant 2)

The excerpts above show the relational in listening to others and what happens when I as performer “manage this”. The excerpts below support the notion of an emotional and physical aspect of the relational in music performance as part of GSP.

- *But I am standing still, quietly, relating to them both, looking at them, I have moved and I'm not standing so alone but more together with them...*
- *When I started out here as a student, I was very afraid of the band situations because I felt that something was expected of me that I didn't know about.*

(Interview informant 2)

Another aspect of relations in musical performance is the relation to the audience. As a singer I need to look at the audience and connect to their presence and in my singer training this has been mostly considered as an aspect of interpretation of the song. In the interview of informant 1 it was mentioned as a wish to “touch someone”, as mentioned above under “On-going self-evaluation” and it is evident as well in my video 3 transcripts and reflections:



- *Both hands are on my microphone again and when I start to sing the lyrics in the B-part the audience start to snap their fingers in the rhythm.*

(Video 3 transcript)

- *I remember thinking when the audience started to snap their fingers; they are feeling sorry for me and need to help me out of this misery. Watching the video for the 5<sup>th</sup> time or more I realize that this is probably not true; the audience is smiling and enjoying the performance and like the rhythms we got into.*

(Video 3 reflection)

These excerpts show that the relation between the performer and the audience is interactive; it is not just the performer conveying a message to the audience. The audiences' response to the performance has an impact on the performer's actual experience in the moment.

The four characteristics I have described; multiplicity, on-going self-evaluation, development and relations, constitute the General Self in musical performance (GSP) in this study. All of these characteristics and their aspects refer to a dimension of *self* that is dynamic and something that can change as processes move and contexts differ. The characteristics intertwine and this represents the dynamic aspect of the dimension. It indicates that the dimension of General Self in musical performance is *contextual* in nature. The intertwining dynamics of the dimensions' characteristics will vary with the context.

### 4.3 The Personal Self in Musical Performance



Joan Armatrading was my musical inspiration for three years when I started painting as my first unsteady steps into creative art. This is from the cover of one of her LP's: me myself i

When we refer to ourselves, we refer to more than one dimension. In the literature on *self* we find a dimension that constitutes a less contextual and more permanent aspect of our selves (Baumeister & Bushman, 2014). We are unique individuals, something other than anyone else, and “me” is also a referral to this unique entity. In the context of my study I call this the Personal Self in musical performance (PSP).

The Personal Self in musical performance has in my data a set of characteristics that constitutes a different dimension than General Self in musical performance. These characteristics imply stability, a uniqueness, a “Me” that is different from other human beings, an aspect of our existence that we want to be “true” to. There are only two characteristics of this dimension that comes forward in my research data: The character of Being Me/Authenticity and Presence. This dimension seems to operate, not opposed to but in addition to the General Self in musical performance.

#### 1. Character of being Me/Authenticity

This characteristic is perhaps the aspect of *self* that most people refer to when they talk about *self* (Baumeister, 2014). In my data I find three aspects of this dimension; honesty, exposure and uniqueness:

- *I usually think before entering stage: now I have to expose myself, try to be honest – I have to be honest – and that honesty in praxis means ... if there is an off key note when I sing, then that's honest.*

(Interview informant 2)

- *For me that's about the particular notion of self – and I think, that's not only ... the interconnection comes because it's not just interesting for the people to listen, but it's interesting for the player*  
(Interview informant 1)
- *... because I can stand for that – I'm good with that – then I haven't tried to ... sort of ... when... you have the experience too ... to have been singing something – then I can say after that my focus was to hide something – camouflage something I felt didn't work out – or .. I can remember singing and thinking ... if I do like this now, then this person, who's been my teacher, ... that I'm good because that's what she likes .. then I feel dishonest afterwards*
- *(...) and that it is experienced as honest*  
(Interview informant 2)
- *I never forget the happiness I feel on stage, that good feeling of being just me, not more, not less, just daring to stand for (?) it*  
(Personal rehearsal log)

In all of the excerpts above, the “me” part of Personal Self in musical performance comes forward as something good connected to honesty, even if “there is an off key note”. It also seems to be connected to happiness and to something authentic of being just me.

The excerpts below show how the Personal Self in the shape of an authentic “me” in performance has to do with exposure, not only in terms of why me is important, but also in terms of what might be at risk, described here as “burn out” and “disaster”.

- *Yes, I love my mistakes too ... it's also a part of the communication and interaction – sometimes when we talk, we're not being grammatically correct because your focus is not on being grammatically corrects ... one can like that little weed, as part of the lawn...*

- *Before I enter the stage I try to put myself into a kind of mental state – or a focus – give me focus – that’s about not playing a role – to expose myself...*

(Interview informant 2)

- *(... )some performers who gave far - too much - away of themselves – to much ... too personal giving the “ME” on stage ... and that will only end up in a disaster, actually – or you burn out – ‘cause you can’t keep spilling out yourself from stage, emotionally and in a autobiographically, you can’t do it..*
- *Why are you doing this, who are you, why should I watch you, why do you do that?- and that was question, that was a journey we set out on for a whole year – it was like therapy really –*

(Interview informant 1)

## 2. Presence

When I first set out to do this research my preconceptions were that *self* as a core existence manifest itself in the degree of presence we manage to have in the context. This was linked to my experience with mindfulness training, where “attentive presence” is a core concept (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). There has to be an element of ourselves in all actions; it is linked to our existence. But our experience of our selves can vary and change, with time, context, social relations etc. (Baumeister & Bushman, 2014). It is interesting to note that “presence” is not mentioned in Baumeister and Bushman’s book in Social Psychology.

This study indicates both presence and lack of presence as an aspect of self in musical performance. Studying the videos of my performances I find different levels of “presence”. The third video seems to be a full presence where I am connected to the message of the song I am performing:

- *I can see that I am performing the lyrics, trying to underline the story of the song or the message of the song in the first part, and also the music when I sing the song straight the second time. I get more dynamic in the second part and this is further enhanced in the third part, so there is a dramatic build-up of the performance.*

(Video 3-transcript)

In the video transcript below there seems to be a full lack of presence, where my focus is on how to find the other performers and the rhythm:

- *The band leader introduces the song but says only half the title, and counts up for the band. It starts to play in the wrong tempo and have to stop: I give a big open-mouth smile and stick my tongue in my cheek (it's very obvious) and make a face by lifting my eyebrows. The band starts again, I'm moving my lips in the rhythm they are playing in a bap-bap.*

(Video 2 transcript)

In these examples we can see that there is a difference in presence; in the first there is an obvious concentration and interpretation and in the second there is lack of presence and concentration in both the band and myself – I seem to get disturbed by the bands' wrong playing.

This example shows also the link between the dimensions of *self*; this presence or lack of presence can be connected to the multiplicity- and on-going self-evaluation characteristics of the General Self. I will get back to the interaction of the dimensions in a later section in this chapter.

From the personal log and the interviews we can find excerpts that reflect on presence:

- *I was present almost the whole time, - I lost it once during an improvisation – started on something else, forgot myself, got lost*

(Personal rehearsal log)

- *... makes you more accepting, of yourself, more aware of yourself, I think is always a good thing – again – we didn't give it the name mindfulness –but we basically use some of those techniques*
- *... it is yourself playing that part, so that is something that can only come from something of yourself*

(Interview informant 1)

- .. *So how much am I present in what I am doing nowadays? I don't know. Feel there is a lot of mechanic activity – and I can feel it makes me dissatisfied! It doesn't get good when I don't put myself into it – I notice I get more happy and satisfied when I have small concerts for myself instead of singing technically*
- *The end of the song was more present ...*  
(Personal rehearsal log)

A particularly interesting observation in the excerpts above is the distinction between 'mechanic activity' and 'presence', and the fact that this 'presence' might be lost and re-found in the process. The term "putting myself into it" indicates that presence has a strong connection to "being there" also for oneself. Again we can see the connection to the General Self dimension, this time to the ambition- and confidence characteristics. It still cannot be designated as the same, as this characteristic of the Personal Self offers a distinct different understanding or dimension to the experience.

#### 4.4 The Embodied Self in Musical Performance



Performance at CVI in 2011

The Embodied Self in musical performance can be seen as the embodied manifestation of the Personal and the General Self in musical performance. This is how we show ourselves through our bodywork – bodily expressions and movements, tensions or easiness, breath, vocal expressions etc. In our western culture there's been more than a century of dualism in the consideration of body and mind. From Descartes and onwards this has been an axiom for all research in both social sciences and medicine (Gergen, 2009, Skårderud 1997). Psychologists and other health workers have offered different views on this, the holistic view being especially strong within the so called alternative medicine or treatments. Governmental demands in medicine and psychology has for many years been oriented towards research-based methods – also called evidence-based treatments as the official view, and the implicit diagnostic demands tend to separate the body and the mind. Even though there is an agreement that our emotions are felt through our body somehow, and that our emotions are important for our mental state and health we still seem to think we can separate the two when we talk about our *self*.

Embodiment is prominent in phenomenological literature, and there is a live discussion on how to understand embodiment (Bowman, 2007, Van Manen 1990, Stelter, 1998). I will not dwell in this discussion but merely point out that the term itself is not unproblematic, even though widely used. Again, I will get back to this in the discussion of the findings.

I find a number of references to the body in my data. Self-consciousness, listening through the body, experiencing through the senses, balancing on a line, embodied consciousness of the self, - these are examples from these excerpts. According to my data the body gives us the sensations and the manifestations of our emotions, reactions and our lived lives.

The Embodied Self has 3 characteristics as they appear in my material; 1) bodily sensation, 2) balance, and 3) physical presence.

### **1. Bodily sensation**

Sensing through the body and sensing in the body might not be distinguishable, but it is a fact that our body is our main source for sensation. When we talk about ourselves and our experiences we often refer to our bodily sensations. In musical performance we use our bodies to express the music, and as a singer I am vulnerable to the body's state as it will be exposed in the performance through the voice. The two main aspects of bodily sensation in performance in my material are connected to bodily experience and bodily communication.

Bodily experience in musical performance is in my data described as an ongoing process of registering what's going on, listening to the music and co-musicians and adjusting the performing act; bodily experience and bodily communication intertwine; the experience of being on stage in making music influence the communication of the music and vice versa. This is evident in my videos and in the interview of informant 2:

- *The voice is now more strained, it sounds as if I am struggling with the pitch or the words. It is still in pitch, but the band is playing even louder so the vocal is drowning. There is little dynamics in the singing; it can't be done with the volume from the band and the tempo of the song.*

(Video 2 transcript)

- *Yes, - then it doesn't become what you thought beforehand, it becomes something else, then it becomes that I sort of suck in what I hear around me, and - hem - it's difficult to talk about it as concrete music - but I could say, using the bodily sense that can be...*

(Interview informant 2)

In the excerpts from my interviews below, bodily *experience* in music performance is described with reference to multimodality, our background and life, as well as thinking and the brain. According to informant 1, bodily experience in musical performance is experience of music, which is a broader concept than just the aural, and which stretches beyond the performance, is integrated into life experience and is cognitive by nature.



This experience is described as interactive with regard to the audience as well as the other performers on stage.

- *... to experience the music, is to experience it through many senses, ... the aural part of it is only one of them ... and that it's not an inferior way of listening – it is to watch and therefore experience. I use, you know ... because it's not just about the visual*
- *I'm thinking – the common thing is ... the embodied self, the embodied consciousness of the self, and that comes from everything that you are made of at that point: which is all your physical experience – and your social, cultural familial ... experience up to that moment. Of course that's always a... you are in a process as people - from beginning to end – so... again across life,*
- *(...) (In reference to a study): ... Play a piece of music – examine peoples brain – playing the music and listening – listening to a piece, playing the piece and then THINKING of the music – the same bits of the brain – actually the key bit – of the brain - areas that were related to physicality and movement – the music was experienced as a movement patterns rather than a sound pattern – first and foremost...*

(Informant 1)

Also the communicative aspect of bodily sensation can be found in my data and expressed as an interaction between the performer and what goes on – on stage and off stage:

- *When it tilts me off the stick, because that happens too ... then there is an avalanche of non-musical negative things. Then comes all the bad childhood experiences, of not being liked, that someone is teasing you, frozen out – all that ... now I am THAT person, now I'm that one...*

(Informant 2)

- *I'm moving with the beat, relaxing a bit more, the voice pitch goes down, to my deeper sound, where it should be, for a moment.*
- *... not so sharp, more interaction – bass and piano players are looking at each other – diminuendo and rit. I am standing more still under this part.(Video 1 transcript)*

Bodily sensations as communication and as experience have a link to the General Self and the Personal Self dimensions in musical performance with regard to presence and relations, especially.

## 2. Balance

There is an aspect of the Embodied Self in my data that is described as *balance* and as something that either is there or is not. Bodily balance is connected to bodily sensation, but also comes through as an element of focus in the interviews as well as in the video transcripts. It is described with regard to both movement and calmness, as an embodied experience:

- .. *to balance on a tight rope – and feel that this is no problem – you know it’s scary, you might fall and hurt yourself badly – but I have the balance and the focus, and sort of.. I can aim for it, even if ... but then it’s not quite an adequate metaphor, ...*
- *If I have that balance focus, on the tightrope, then a mistake every now and then – doesn’t have to mean I get tilted ... the body has to move in time – and if you’re not present in that, then the work doesn’t come out the way it was meant to in advance*

The excerpts above indicate that a balance focus is positive for the performance and the performer’s experience of the performance; a mistake does not have a negative impact on the performance. This balance is describes as an embodied fixation in balance.

The balance aspect has a musical dimension with regard to the timing in the performance or music piece being played, and the excerpts below points to how the body is involved in time and also how lack of body balance can disclose discomfort through movements. In this sense we can denote bodily movements in musical performance as an affordance of performance (Gibson, 1977)

- *And to make ... the body and time dimension to work together, that’s experienced as improvisation – when it works*  
(Informant 2)

- *Not standing quite still, but moving less while I'm singing – then there it goes again with all the moves – I recognize myself; I'm uneasy, uncomfortable, upset.*
- *Make a lot of movement – I think I'm trying to get the music into my body, calmer, more relaxed voice, moving toward the pianist and the bass player*

(Video transcript)

Balance is a theme also for the interaction of the dimensions in the phenomenon of self in musical performance. This will be dealt with in a section below.

### 3. Physical presence

In a way this characteristic seems unnecessary to describe; it is obvious that our body is present. It is not a matter of just being there physically, it is a matter of being there physically *present*. Physical presence has a notion of intimacy, of connection between the performer and the audience, as opposed to listening to music from a CD or a radio. The physical presence in this material refers to the body's being in the room, not as opposed to but in addition to the presence-characteristic of the Personal Self dimension, which can be said to be more of a mental presence.

In my data there are three aspects of physical presence that comes through as central; the bodily presence, wholeness and intimacy or closeness.

- *On an instrument as the electric guitar, why is so powerful, popular as it continues to be, is because you can really Hear the body, you can Hear the self you can feel them, you Feel their movement – it's a kind of intimacy, to me –*
- *... you can be a long way away from the person, but you can feel the intimacy - just that it's a sound (?) ... you feel the intimacy, (....) and we know that, as human, - again you don't have to intellectually know that, to respond to it, you feel it - you feel it all over your skin, through your feet*

(Interview informant 1)

The excerpts above from the interview of informant 1 refers to the physical aspect of being there, for the audience as well as the performer; there is a physical interaction

between the people and the music, the sound; the music can be felt physically in the body in addition to the aural side of it. The excerpts below refer to a more problematic side of the physical presence at several levels; the individual level, the social level and the musical level:

- *people are terrified of the body – because the body it... in a way, it is instinct – it has no sense of reason – it's a bit dangerous, the body – because it has instinct – it's a bit messy*
- *People are very self-conscious about their bodies – and again if you're on stage in our culture, that's always the idea of display –sexual display – - for both men and for women - and there is a whole set of anxieties around that - which is very rarely talked about. The body is problematic for classic musicians, and classical performances – always has been a problem – and rating (? - raping?) the ... you know the ... because ...we're going beyond the physical, going into this kind of this very ... the spiritual...*
- *it's very transcendent realm – the more you transcend the body the better the music is – so there's always a problem around that – but of course – even in that tradition of the body – and the gestures of the body, how we understand the sound*  
(Interview informant 1)

These above excerpts indicate negative thoughts and anxieties in connection to bodily presence on stage, as well as a demand on the musician to transcend the body (this is said with reference to a certain musical style or genre).

In my data I also find indication of *wholeness* in the individual that is connected to the physical presence and the mental *self* as well as an intimacy or closeness that has to do with togetherness:

- *The me is always going to be - to be physical – you're not only just your mental self – for me that doesn't make sense – it's coalesces (?) with your ... you are your body...*

- .. *but we still pay a lot of money to go out and often to see, from the back – because we want to be in the physical presence of that person, and that’s exciting*

(Interview informant 1)

- .. *that I abolish sort of, the feeling of being so very much inside of myself – the border is wiped out – and it’s a good feeling – what one might think a baby has – eh.... and that’s something different – a different aspect of it is the opposite feeling of that everyone hates me – love me – not that it’s about loving me, but that we love each other – that is—what I feel of support.*

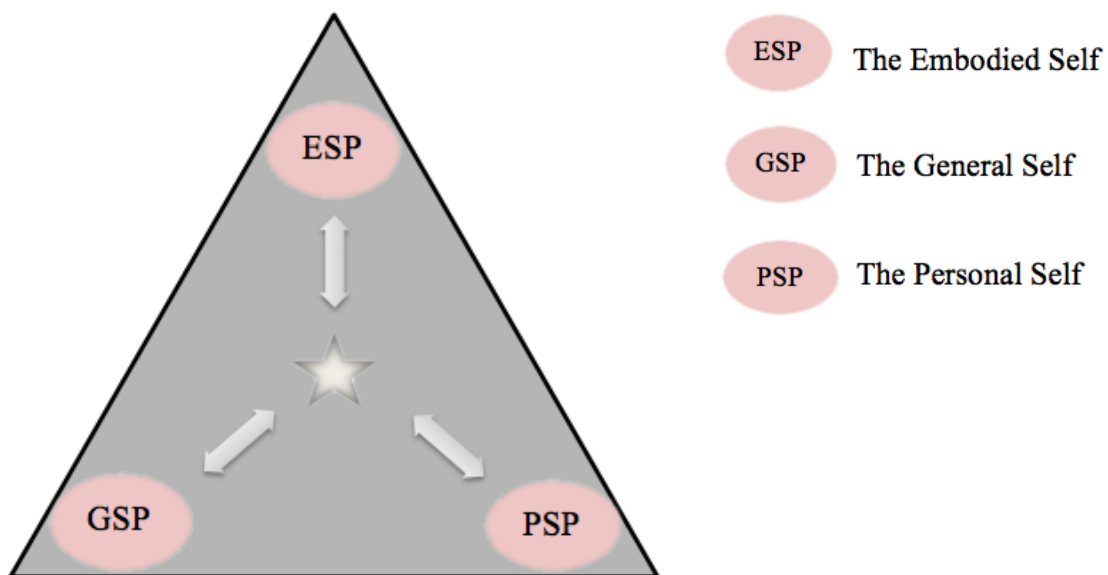
(Interview informant 2)

The excerpts above point to the interactive side of being physically present; it is not only the exciting side of seeing someone perform, but also the effect of intimacy on the performer which gives a positive feeling of support.

#### 4.5 The Interaction of the Dimensions of Self.

I have shown how the *self* can be describes through 3 dimensions, each of which has a set of characteristics that are connected. However, we are still talking about one phenomenon; Self in Musical performance. With the three dimensions at work we need to have an understanding of how they interact or are connected.

In figure 1 below I illustrate how the relation between the three dimensions can be understood. There is no one dimension of self in music performance without the other; the Personal Self cannot exist without the General Self or the Embodied Self and vice versa. I will argue that if the three dimensions are in balance, we are at the core of our Selves in musical performance.



*Figure 1: Illustration of the relationship between the three dimensions of self in musical performance.*

Even if my data shows that separate dimensions of self in musical performance can be described and categorized with different characteristics, I have also shown that The General Self dimension interacts with both the Personal Self dimension and the Embodied Self. True, it can be experienced that our awareness and focus is on one of the three and not all. If we are overly occupied with for instance our relations and how

others relate to us, then there will be an imbalance between the dimensions of your selves in musical performance.

The same thing can apply to the other two dimensions: being overly focused on our Personal Self can take us out of the relations and the context, and become a hinder for communication, and again being too focused on the bodily sensations might enhance performance anxiety and other unpleasant sensations in musical performance.

As the model implies, there is a natural center of self in musical performance that demand a balance of the dimensions. This balance is not an absolute necessity; we are not separated from the other dimensions of *self* at any point. Our awareness of the dimensions will vary with age, maturity, awareness training, interest and need.

#### **4.6 Closing remarks on the findings**

As we have seen throughout these findings, the context is an essential factor to consider with any dimensions of the *self*. The context has a direct influence on us, both physically and mentally. In my analysis of my videos I realized that I am *contextually sensitive*. This sensitivity could be said to be a part of my General Self, relying on feedback from others and relations for conformation. I am curious to study this further, but my understanding at this point is that contextual sensitivity is about more than the relations at hand. It also has to do with the setting; all that is in the context, from the stage to the musicians, the instruments, the technology and the occasion. Through my research process it became evident to me, that I as a person have wishes, needs and preferences that would differ from any other random person.

Taking this further to encompass a general understanding of contextual sensitivity leads to the conclusion that even though there are elements of stability in *self*, our lived experience and living in the world will always be contextual, no matter where we are or what we do, and this will to some extent have an impact on all our dimensions of our selves.

## Chapter 5: Discussion



**Who's to tell this from that?**

**All the words they use, what do they mean?**

**Are they talking about you and me?**

**I sure know for certain, I disagree!**



## 5.0 Discussion

### **One phenomenon: The Self in Musical Performance**

It is vital to bear in mind that we are talking about one phenomenon; and that this is both contextual and situated; one person will experience this phenomenon differently from any other. I will argue that giving a personalized description of ones' own dimensions, or experience of the dimensions of self in musical performance, might be a valuable starting point for students' development process in learning processes. I will get back to this issue in the chapter on educational implications.

I have presented my findings in a three-dimensional model of self in musical performance; the General Self in performance (GSP), the Personal Self in performance (PSP) and the Embodied Self in musical performance (ESP). This model is derived from the data material of this research as it manifested itself in my analysis.

In the literature we can find other models of *self*. Baumeister and Bushman (2014, p. 73) refer to a social psychological understanding of *self* as three parts; interpersonal self, self-knowledge and agent self (or executive function). This is a description that is primarily functional, in answer to the question "What are selves for?" Their model supports the notion of multiplicity, and on-going self-evaluation as described in the General Self, but does not include any denotations on the embodied dimension of self. There is little reference to the Personal Self dimension but they acknowledge the discussion on relatively stable aspects of *self* that constitutes the experience of being oneself throughout life as separate form others.

Shaun Gallagher (2000) takes on a philosophical perspective on self and refers to a "minimal self" and a "narrative self", where "minimal self" refers to a *self* that is devoid of temporal extension and the "narrative self" involves identity and continuity over time. This conceptualization can be partly compared to the three-dimensional model of self in musical performance. Gallagher's' conceptions are of a general nature and is not explicitly contextualized.

Gallagher's (2000) concept of "minimal self" represents the embodiment and the uniqueness of the individuals' experiences or consciousness and can be compared with the PSP and the ESP in my study. The "narrative self" can be compared with my GPS with its multiplicity aspect, on-going self-evaluation and relations. Gallagher refers to several other writers on *self*, and refers to Shoemaker (Gallagher, 2000, p. 15) and his description of "I":

My access to myself (my *self*) in first-person experience is immediate and non-observational; that is, it doesn't involve a perceptual or reflective act of consciousness.

This supports my findings describing the PSP dimension in musical performance as characterized by being me/authenticity and presence.

What my study has not revealed direct data on is the action-aspect of *self*, which both Baumeister and Bush and Gallagher refer to; there is an origin for action that comes from self. Baumeister and Bush have called this the Agent Self and Gallagher writes about a sense of agency as part of a self-awareness built into movement and perception. In my study this is described indirectly through the characteristic of the Embodied Self and the General Self in musical performance, and by the fact that the context of musical performance is in its nature active and agency oriented.

Support for the notion of a Personal Self dimension in musical performance is mostly found in less cognitive-scientific literature. Jon Kabat-Zinn (2013) has written many books on mindfulness as a strategy for stress-relief and coping, and this method has been used worldwide though the past twenty years. This method has as a core concept the Attentive Presence, as a meditative procedure that enhances bodily and mental tension-release and balance. Attentive presence will, as I see it, enhance balance between the three dimensions of self in musical performance. The methods focus is holistic, and encompass all three dimensions of self as they appear in this study. I propose that Linda Finley's concept of embodied self-awareness also can be said to support this study's findings of Embodied Self in musical performance.

The question of interrelations between the different selves is central in both Gallagher and Baumeister and Bush, as in my model of the three dimensions. This interrelationship or interaction is difficult to express; it will lead to even more concepts

and deeper complexities, as there are many aspects of such an interaction to be considered. This is related to the question of consciousness. Gallagher refers to Damasio (Gallagher, 200, p. 20) who says it has to do with "... narrowly defined embodied capabilities and feeling". This makes sense to me; The Embodied Self dimension in musical performance encompasses the bodily sensations in expressions and communication.

The importance of embodiment as central in musical performance has been studied by Jane Davidson (2005). In her research on classical music the body's movements have been shown to be of great significance to the interpretation and expression of the music. Bowman and Powell (2007, p. 1101) concludes in one of their articles that "There are profoundly important bodily dimensions to music that are not reliant upon the act of performing for their realization". He refers to the embodied listening skills and calls for bodily informed pedagogies in music education that address these abilities.

As shown in the data of this study, there is a close link between the physical presence, bodily sensations and the hearing – or listening - in a musical performance. One of characteristics of the Embodied Self is bodily sensation as communication and experience.

The dimensional perspective on *self* is also found in Reinhard Stelter (1998) a phenomenological researcher in the field of sports. He defines the body self:

The body self is constantly updated by sensations, perceptions and cognitions which evolve directly from bodily experience in concrete situations and which reach the consciousness via the organs of senses, via proprioceptors and via the vestibular system. The formation of the body self is based on intentionality and is manifest by the unity between perception and movement. The body self is a construction constituted in the dialog between the subject and the environment. (Stelter, 1998, p. 10)

The emotional aspect of musical performance is in this study part of GSP, both as an on-going self-evaluation and ambition and is supported by Schei (2011) and Beyer (2013). The Embodied Self is not "another self" – in these findings the Embodied Self is the manifestation of the Personal Self and the General Self; it is through our body we feel the sensations of the emotions. This is in accordance with phenomenology; our

lived experience is through the body. Emotions arise in relation to others (in the broad sense, also objects) and the relational sides of us are situated in the General Self. David Best's notion of the rationality of emotions would support this finding, also.

In my experience, a musical performance is an emotional experience, but it would be presumptuous to say that everyone else would say the same thing. Our bodies are involved in musical performance, and thus bodily sensation and communication is involved. How this is interpreted is another matter, and as emotions arise in relations, it is also a reflection on our lived experience, and thus not to be generalized.

To be in balance in musical performance might to some people both be a physical and mental balance, and in some cases felt as separate. I propose that this characteristic is holistic. We cannot experience balance unless it is both physical and mental. Being in balance is something we strive for, and in the context of musical performance it relates directly to the quality of the performance. All bodywork like yoga, mindfulness training, meditation, karate and similar sports, physiotherapy etc. have balance as focus – both mental and physical. Balance is in our everyday life considered as something personal in our cultures; we are not to point out another person's imbalance, unless in a clear position to do so as friend, mentor, therapist or any other role with that kind of authority or relation.

Finley (2006), Skårderud (1997) and Bowman (2007) have all referred to Merleau-Ponty's view on embodiment (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962) – the body is “*the being in the world*”. This supports the dimension of Embodied Self in musical performance as one of three dimensions; there is no being without the body, there is no “*self*” without the body. Balance must be considered in a holistic frame, as equilibrium of *being in the world*.

This study has offered a model for understanding this balance as something to work with from different angles; it doesn't have to be a given ability or something that “others have, but not I” – it can be achieved through awareness and training.

## **The contextual and relational significance**

Kenneth Gergen (2009) argues that *self* is relational, not denouncing a Personal Self but pointing to the very being in the world as inherently relational; everything we do is in relation to something or someone. In relation to performance he states that “There are no stand-alone performances; action gain meaning through co-action” (Gergen, 2009, p. 106). In the context of musical performance the relations are between the performers on stage and the performers and the audience.

In my study I find an excerpt from my rehearsal log where I comment on the possible necessity to make a performance for myself, alone – in order to be able to “put myself into it” (see the section on “presence” in the previous chapter). In this sense we can relate to others also when we are alone; it is the mental representation of others that becomes the relation. Gergen denotes the *self* as multi-being that is socially embedded and fully engaged in the flow of relationship (Gergen, 2009, p. 137). This makes sense of all on-going processes within the individual, bodily, cognitive and emotional.

Gergen also points at the body as relationship; our emotions are manifestations of relationships more than manifestations of our private body. He views our emotions as relational performances. This is contextual, and it is co-active, even when alone, carried out in privacy. In my rehearsal log I had a reflection about “putting myself into it” in the rehearsal situation by having an imagined audience. I see this as an example of what Gergen is referring to, and take it in support of the dimension of Personal Self in musical performance, even though Gergen denotes it relational *self*. In my study relations is a characteristic of the General Self dimension, but as pointed out previously; we are talking about *one* phenomenon. The interaction between the dimensions is contextual and relational.

My findings in this study show the significance of the context in understanding the self in musical performance; context sensitivity seems of importance and the actual context of having an audience is in itself a prerequisite for a performance. My reference to “contextual sensitivity” is also in its nature relational; being preoccupied with what’s around or who’s around points to the relations in the context.

It needs to be pointed out that the context also consists of the physical elements of the room, of the technology and the surroundings in general. As Godlovitch (1998) points

out, the audience is an intended audience; we make a concert for a specific audience, whether they are children, jazz-interested audience, our locals or by-passers. The context is also cultural, we are influenced by the culture we grew up in and live in (Gergen, 2009).

We choose our location, and we decide how to set the stage, no matter what the conditions are. We also know that what we make of it will be decisive for the result; if the stage is in the inner corner of a pub or on a stage above the audience we would have two very different concerts, even with the same program and musicians (Christophersen, 2009, p. 168-182).

As I reflected on video 2 from the Big Band concert in my own study, the space at my disposal was severely limited and this has an impact on my performance that I experienced as negative. I could hardly move my feet, and I had to be careful with my arm-movements so as not to hit the baritone saxophone player to my left. Even the sound setting in this context were limiting, as I was standing so close to the band that I could hardly hear myself, even though there was a monitor – though behind me facing the bass-player and not me, as we had to share a monitor due to space restrictions. My experience of the Big Band context influenced my performance to the extent that I was unhappy after the concert, it felt as if I didn't get the opportunity to do my best; though I did my best under the circumstances. I did not feel I was able to connect to the audience in an interactive process. Conveying an emotional message seems to me to be depended on this interaction or connection.

### **The significance of holistic communication**

The aspect of communication is naturally relational, and Jane Davidson (2005) refers to her above mentioned research on bodily communication in musical performance.

Davidson's focus is on bodily movement in the production of the performance, as her studies encompass musicians from several genres. This is connected to achievement and expression and she point out that these movements are perceived by the audience with small margins in different gestures as directly related to the interpretation of the music.

One of the findings of my study was also that bodily sensation comes through as both experience and communication.

Music performance is communication (Miell, McDonald, Hargreaves, 2005) and music performance is art, and the communicative aspect of a musical performance as art will be understood in the context of the viewer or the listener. Welch (2005) argues that singing is intra-personal as well as inter-personal, social and cultural communication. His point of view is that singing is a communication of a basic emotional state, conveying also the cultural facets of the individual and context.

From the performers point of view I will argue that the communication is an exposure of the whole phenomenon of self in musical performance; the balance of the three dimensions will vary, and the focus will vary but it will always be an expression of the whole *self*. In this sense I would define musical performance as much as act of *self* as an act of art. “Art” does not act in itself; art exists only as a relation of the viewer, the spectator, the listener (Gergen, 2009). If art is not an expression of *self*, then *self* would not be in art.

There is a link between the context and the communication that is bodily manifest and in the terms of my three-dimensional model of Self in performance, I will argue that the Embodied Self is a manifestation of the General Self and the Personal Self; all three being the phenomenon of *Self* in musical performance.

## **5.1 Answering the research questions:**

In this discussion I have pointed out how the three dimensions of self in musical performance, General Self, Personal Self and Embodied Self, can be supported by other models of self, and by different views on musical performance.

In Chapter 1, Introduction I presented three research questions. My answers to the questions are integrated in the findings chapter of the study as well as in my discussion of relevant theory. Even so, I have chosen to summarize my answers in the following in a more concentrated form.

### **Research question 1:**

*What is it that sometimes makes us experience a performance as poignant and heartfelt? And what is the significance of self in such experience?*

The study is based on a phenomenological perspective, which implies that an experience is contextual and relational. As a consequence the answer to the question is also contextual and relational; we experience a musical performance as an experience of our own *lifeworld* which is constituted by our bodies, culture, experiences and the context in question. From the findings of the study and the theories presented we can infer that *conveying a message* is vital to the musical performance; whether this is an emotion or a visual projection. As one informant said: “(...) I want to touch somebody” as an expression of her musical intention. An act of “touching” somebody would in my mind be poignant and heartfelt, but we can have no direct influence on how this intention is received. The Husserlian understanding of intentionality refers to the *self's* directional attitude in the lifeworld as part of our existence, and this intentionality can be said to be expressed through art. It is my conclusions from this study that *self* is the bodily experience of the interaction in a musical performance and there is no one-directional action that can be said to “make” a performance poignant and heartfelt.

On the other hand, the three-dimensional model of self in musical performance suggest a connection between the balance of *self* and the expressions of music; in case of less balance between the self-dimensions General Self, Personal Self and Embodied Self, this would be revealed through the voice in a singer; As Eken and Schei have pointed out, the emotional aspect is innate in a vocal performance. With this point of view we can infer that the performers state (of self-dimensions) is decisive for the extent of musical intentionality at the moment. By this I mean to say: If I'm not in balance, the energy of my performance will be suffering by “leakage” of attention to the imbalanced state – whether that is due to context sensitivity, personal issues or relational aspects in the context.

Singing is an exposure of *self*, and a vocal musical performance is an exposure of *self* – through the voice, through the actual interpretation and the vocal sounds; all three dimensions need to work in balance for a performance to be experienced as poignant.



This is as much relevant for other musicians as for singers; the actual music making is the same process; the instrument is different.

### **Research question 2:**

*To what extent is self in music performance influenced by contextual elements, like technology, stage settings, audience etc.? And how can this influence be analysed and described?*

The contextual elements of a musical performance are of great importance, according to this study's findings and theoretical grounding. The findings suggest that the contextual elements can influence a performance to the extent that the performance is experienced as negative, or bad, by the performer. The study has not answered explicitly how this influence can be analysed and described, but there are two areas of contextual elements described in the findings; the stage setting and the relational aspect of the performance, between musicians and to the audience. In my reflection on the videos I pointed out the necessity to take responsibility of the relational aspect as well as the physical contextual elements. This responsibility can easily become "victim" of the democracy in bands; everyone and no-one has the responsibility. As a result of this study my attitude to this has changed; I must from now on be more aware of and clear about how much these elements influence my performance

### **Research question 3**

*How can our understanding and awareness of self in performance be relevant for music education practices?*

In the last chapter, Educational Implications, I have pointed at some areas to work with to strengthen students' bodily balance and self-awareness in musical performance. The study has also addressed the issues of voice-shame and emotional development as areas of concern for a vocal teacher. The three-dimensional model can be a useful tool for both teacher and students in their work with students' awareness of *self* in musical performance.

As Schei (1998) has pointed out, the voice is sometimes connected to shame, and this is to me an excellent example of how the three dimensions interact; my Embodied Self and my Personal Self is “at war” with my General Self. The Personal Self-dimension, the “being me” part of it does not comply with the General Self dimensions that is relational and confirmation seeking; I am “wrong”, and this is revealed through my body, my voice, my Embodied Self-dimension.

I believe this conflict is universal, in the sense that so many experience this that we cannot rule out anyone. This leads to the conclusions that musical education should address this as a common feature of music-making; it is a conflict that would reveal itself for any student doing things they experience as exposure of their selves.

Becoming used to deal with this conflict would enhance any music education, and I will in the next chapter propose how this can be done.

## Chapter 6: Educational Implications



**So what's it for, all this, you say?  
I never ask for your display  
How can you think that I should be  
Better off, by being me?**

**Who are you to tell me how?  
Or even why, if I may ask  
I'll let you know if I'll be ready  
Yet, I need grounding,  
To be steady**

## 6.0 Educational Implications

One of the objectives of my project is to study the significance of *self* in musical performance in order to reflect on and suggest an educational approach to music performance education. In my experience we need tools to teach musical performance that goes beyond the practicing of skills and technicalities and gives students something to work on that is related to their selves in the context. Schei (2007, 1998) and Beyer (2013), and Bowman (2002, 2007) all support this view, calling for an embodied pedagogy of music education.

One of my motivations for this thesis has been to contribute to an embodied pedagogy in music performance education that also includes the *self* as an issue. In my experience, working with musical performance education is a personal developmental process, and it would be to the benefit for students and teachers to have a tool and/or an approach to this personal developmental aspect included in the education. I am positively sure that any teacher in music performance would be able to refer to many episodes or situation where they have had to deal with the students' emotional or otherwise personal issues with a direct link to their experience of or perception of musical performance or performance training. By including *self* as an issue in music education, the education would focus on the whole person and include the contextual elements present in each student's lifeworld, and thus include the phenomenological aspect of musical performance as an affordance of musical performance. To my eyes this would implicate that music education makes the knowledge of art and art expressions into practices, and not only a theoretical perspective.

I will argue that there are two areas of focus that could be included in a curriculum for music education students; *bodily balance* and *awareness training*. The two are not separable; they both relate to different dimensions of *self*. These areas are traditionally not focused in music education, curriculum-wise, but probably more focused in practices run by vocal- teachers.

The Danish vocal-teacher Susanna Eken argues in her book on the human voice (1998) that it is a necessity to relate to how the students are experiencing their lives; it is revealed in the voice and it is entrenched in the body through tensions. She points at singing as psychic energy as well as physical. She further notes that a vocal lesson is as

much about personal development as technical singing education. There is a demand on awareness of the bodily processes of singing and how this interacts with the psychic energy that must be present to be able to perform.

This awareness is important for all musicians; music-playing involves the body whatever instrument. We are talking about an awareness that is both bodily and psychic or mental.

As I see it, being in balance between the three dimensions of self in musical performance is what we all aim for; this is when we are at the center of ourselves, with a view of the moment on what is outside of us, in front of us, around us. When we are in balance we can focus on our communication, with the audience and our co-musicians and the music. We are in balance between the three dimensions of self when we don't look at ourselves as if on the outside, judging or assessing what we are doing, but instead "go with the flow"; it is a state of body and mind that we sometimes refer to as "flow", in creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996) or any kind of concentration that takes away time; we don't count minutes or pages when we are in this balance or flow. This described state is achievable for anyone who seeks it, but as we all experience, it doesn't come on command. The balance is not a decision; it's a process of many factors that interrelate within our three dimensions – as the findings of this study have shown.

## **6.1 Working with awareness of *self* through the body**

To work with students through the body can be done in many different ways, and it needs to be defined within the educational setting with planned activities, knowledge and skills by the teacher. Many fields have developed methods that can be applied in musical performance training; drama, theatre, dance, yoga and meditation, basic body knowledge, to name some. This calls for an interdisciplinary approach to awareness-training for musicians and music educators.

My own experience from mindfulness training through basic body knowledge worked for me, but requires motivation and patience. We can recommend different approaches to the students, but the point is; they should have some recommendations to consider. If the topic is in the curriculum, being addressed as relevant for their education, the

awareness of the individuals' need to work with bodily balance and awareness will increase.

For a singer, the tension is heard in the voice. In my experience, it is never pointed out by the teachers, but they try to bypass the tensions through technique. Bypassing tensions through technique is of course necessary, but I would propose that giving this aspect of music education proper attention can lead to both an awareness of and a language to talk about it and work with it. Schei (1998) points out the aspect of voice-shame as necessary area of concern for a vocal teacher. It was also one of the findings of my study.

I propose that working with bodily balance and awareness of *self* through the body becomes a natural element in basic music education. Regular "awareness-training" with different approaches applied would over time develop a sense of awareness as well as strengthening the bodily coordination of movement and breath which is vital for musicians, not only for singers.

It is generally known that the things we don't talk about are the things we feel more insecure about, more self-conscious and more embarrassed about. Acknowledging the natural every-day tensions and its revelation through the voice will result in less self-consciousness and embarrassments and a gradually more natural communication around these issues.

Awareness-training through the body does not have to be separated from other music-related topics; on the contrary, it can be to the advantage of several educational objectives.

Such work should be applied with the same care and with a defined didactic model as all other areas of the musical education. I suggest 4 areas of training that all would enhance bodily balance and awareness training within a standard music education curriculum:

- a. Body percussion. This will enhance rhythm-sensation and rhythm-understanding, coordination, vocal training, and teach the students rhythmical music pedagogy (Christophersen, 2009).

- b. Drama exercises. Drama exercises are excellent awareness training that can include body movements and body- sensations training.
- c. Theatre exercises. Theatre-methods offer a range of exercises that includes dramatic knowledge of performance, vocal exercises, emotional display and immersion
- d. Free musical improvisations. Free improvisations invite students to playfulness, tensions-release, enhance listening-skills in an ensemble as well as spontaneous composing.
- e. Dancing. Free dancing and improvisational dancing will contribute to tension-release, muscular training, coordination and balance. Remembering certain defined steps like in ballroom dancing or folk-dancing are not consistent with bodily balance and awareness training until the students are motivated for it.

To my experience, people with tension issues dread these exercises, because it inflicts on them the discomfort of seeing, feeling and realizing their tensions, which will feel like bad coordination, lack of imagination, lack of fantasy or ideas. With regular training and a variety of exercises as a natural part of the education this uneasiness will disappear (Kabat-Zinn, 2013).

Working with the suggested exercises will strengthen the students embodied selves, and as they gradually become more aware of the interactions between their bodies and the other dimensions of *self*, it will also strengthen their sense of *self* in performance.

## **6.2 A process-informed educational approach**

Applying the above described methods demands an educational approach which takes into account the students' differences, in motivation and experience, skill and psychology. Jank and Meyer (2009) argue that methods, contents and objectives are interrelated and must be considered by their interaction. They present a hermeneutic model of structure for education, naming 5 structural elements to be considered by analysis, planning and implementation of the educational design; task-formulation, the subject matter, process- plan, action-plan and social architecture. Their model can be

used in the planning process as well as in the analysis of the teaching sequence in a hermeneutical process.

The theoretical grounding for an approach to bodily balance and awareness-training needs a perspective on the developmental process the students would be undergoing and this would call for skilled supervision from the teachers.

In working with bodily balance and awareness there must be room for the individual students' personal learning process and conclusions as to what knowledge they acquire through this process. This implies a certain degree of democracy; the students must be part of the decision-process during class.

I would propose the following elements for a didactic approach to be used in this work:

1. Student prerequisites must be considered. This can be a joint process, where the students are encouraged to think through their previous experiences, their motivation and knowledge, as well as the teachers' responsibility to assess each individual as well as the group. Further options must be based on these considerations.
2. Teacher prerequisites must be clarified. There must be a minimal demand on the teachers' skills to conduct this type of educational process as well as knowledge of the exercises to be used in class. By having two teachers the combination of skills, experience and knowledge will secure a good group process. We cannot at any time have our eyes on all students, and this type of work requires close monitoring of each as well as the whole group.
3. Room conditions and technicalities must be addressed prior to any of the exercises. It is recommended that all group-process work is conducted in spacy rooms large enough for movement and subgroup work. This is not just a physical prerequisite; the psychological strain in some of these exercises requires enough "breathing-space" so that a student can withdraw from others' attention if necessary. Physical work is of course often physically straining too, so there must be windows to open.
4. Clear objectives must be defined for each exercise. These objectives cannot be of any other character than procedural; we have no way of defining what each student should experience, but we can facilitate good processes and arrange for



certain activities that we from experience know can promote certain type of learning processes or discussions or experiences.

5. Follow-up procedures must be defined prior to each session to ensure that students can be supervised in their work in-between group sessions. To my experience this is rarely extensive, but as teachers we would have “an eye” for this need and know what to do with it if necessary.

I have conducted many group processes with adults in a variety of settings. It is my experience that awareness training and inter- relational skills training – or communications skills - are the two top priorities for most of the groups I have worked with. Giving students this type of training will not only enhance their musical skills, but will also develop their understanding of communications, cooperation and their overall personal development.

## **6.2 Improvisation as teaching method**

My context of musical performance is vocal jazz. In jazz there is a demand for improvisation and this is traditionally connected to improvisations over chords or chord-progressions. In my experience improvisation is perhaps the area of musical training that involves an exposure of *self* in a manner that can be quite intimidating, and it is easily connected to shame and a sense of failure if the demand is on “right or wrong” in improvisational terms. In jazz there are contradicting attitudes; on one hand we should learn how to do it properly according to the tradition and on the other hand "everything is allowed” and there are “no rules”.

My teachers have told me everything from “ learn the chord progressions, find the blue notes, try to make a sentence, make a connection between the musical line, listen to what the others are doing” to things like “ just be yourself, this is your interpretation, you decide, love what you do, there are no rules”. This is sometimes connected to what type of jazz we are working with, but there is a demand of craftsmanship within jazz improvisation; it must be musical. So being musical in a jazz context requires an understanding of and knowledge of the genre.

Improvisation is also present in other musical genres; then with a different set of musical demands, but there is something in common that everyone can learn: it is a spontaneous composing process.

Free improvisations are more or less frightening to most people the first time they try it, but it is my experience that free improvisation can be musically and artistic liberating. It is vital that these exercises are conducted in a safe context and with an open and accepting attitude and atmosphere. This responsibility is on the teachers; they must provide the necessary time and the atmosphere for the individual process of getting acquainted with the method and finding acceptance with each other in the group.

This calls for a planned and educated program, where defined methods are applied – it must not be a random process. The demand on the teacher would be to improvise their teaching according to the group conditions, but still have a “tool-kit” of known methods to apply.

Working with improvisation can be used to strengthen the students’ awareness of their personal self-dimensions by facilitating communication about their improvisational experiences and relate these to how we experience ourselves, the different dimensions of ourselves and the interaction between our dimensions of *self*. It would be a most relevant context to discuss contextual sensitivity as well as personal responsibility, in relation to musical performance.

In my experience, it is possible to have group discussions on any topic, as long as the facilitator is trained and aware of the delicacy of discussing personal things. In our culture the educational setting is often defined as a non-personal arena; we tend to generalize knowledge and learning processes. To me this is a contradiction in the field of art education; taking the position that art – musical performance – is relational, we should definitely put this on the agenda.

These above mentioned arguments are based on personal experience and knowledge, as well on the as the findings of this study. In order to get a more systematic knowledge of how to work with the dimensions of self in musical performance through bodily balance and improvisation as awareness training, I would suggest further research in an educational setting, as an interactive classroom study.

## **6.4 Closing remarks**

I have in the above section outlined some ideas on the educational implications of my findings in this study. It is hopefully also for others to find something of interest, in their search for better musical education. It is my hope that I will be able to develop my ideas further in a practical educational setting. I believe my findings will influence my future work with students, including working with the issue of self in musical performance through bodily balance and awareness.

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## Appendix

- The photographs of the rocks in balance (Front-page, Chapters 1, 3, 5 and 6) are all from the artist Michael Grab. He travels around the world and create balance-sculptures of rocks he finds there and then. They are not glued or in any other way fastened; a small push will dissemble the creation.
- The photo of a feather in balance with a stone (Chapter 2) is bought from CanStockPhoto online.
- The photograph of the stone in a hand (Chapter 4) is a finding from Stone Age in Israel.
- The photo of Am I Good Enough-writing in hand (under General Self in performance) is of unknown origin, downloaded online.
- The cover-photo of Joan Armatrading (under Personal Self in musical performance) is from her LP: me, myself, i.
- The photograph of me (under Embodied Self in musical performance) is from a concert in Copenhagen in May 2011. I am singing Surabaya Johnny with a pianist.
- All texts on the front-pages (under the photos) of each chapter are written by me.