

Tip of the week! 1 september 2021

This weeks tip is about overcoming your FEAR!

When I was in high school I suffered from performance anxiety. I studied for a test way too long and when I finally decided I was ready to go to bed I lay awake for hours or fell asleep dreaming about the next morning. It's not that I couldn't do it, because my grades were all above average. So why was I that afraid?!

I graduated and started to make more music, the only important thing for me at that time. My fear was completely gone.

I started at the conservatory and again there it was.. the anxiety. But this time only when I had to play the piano, especially during my exams, when I had to play in front of a jury and my colleagues. I started to sweat, I had practiced for hours and hours but couldn't seem to hit the right notes when the teacher came into the room. Of course, I sometimes was nervous when I had to sing on stage but in no comparison with me playing the piano.

I started thinking what is the difference? Well for starters, I sing from my heart. Playing the piano is a way to accompany myself, but I'm not really expressing myself. And that is a big difference.

Two: I don't need my hands ;) When I'm nervous I can easily control my vocal folds but my hands completely go their own way hitting keys that are not even close to the one I was supposed to hit!

One of my students started taking singing lessons because she was so terrified to sing. Her worst nightmare? People hearing her sing. And what a waste, cause she has the voice of an angel, truly such a sweet pure voice. We started at the basis and worked on her breathing. She immediately got more relaxt using her breath in the right way and she managed to talk in front of big audience without stressing out. We started working on her singing and her hearing by making recordings and listening back to them together. Noticing the tension and dealing with it. A few years later I moved to Friesland so I had to leave the students behind, but another year later she joined me again making the trip from Groningen. I was pleased to see she had overcome her fear and now was used to talk in front of audiences and liked her singing voice.

So this weeks tip.. Sing from the heart and focus on your breathing. Small steps but you will get there. Have fun!