

# BE THE MUSIC

Be The Music is an invitation, an encouragement and a guide for musicians to use their whole being as an instrument. The more I play and perform, the more I realize the potential of what our being can influence and the immense possibilities we have to support the music.

To treat the being as an instrument, it is important to engage with it. Our existence is possibly one of the more complex themes of life, but we can narrow that down a bit when we think about our being as if it were our normal instrument:

we **LISTEN**, we **CLEAN** and we **TUNE**.

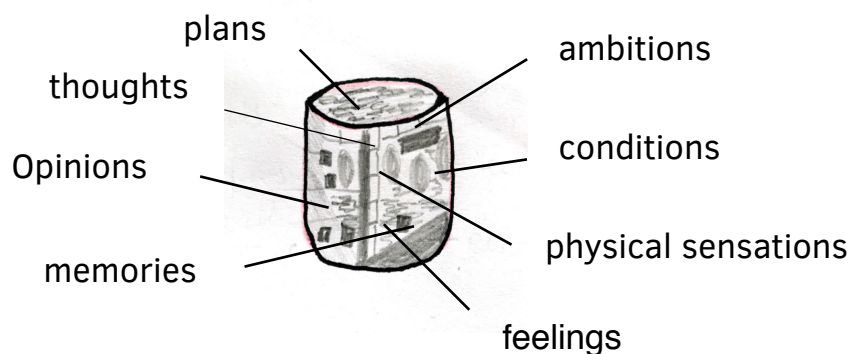
## LISTEN

***Listen to your being and distinguish the changing parts from the unchanging part.***

The changing parts are for example feelings, thoughts, plans, memories, ambitions, opinions and conditions as well as any physical sensation. The unchanging part can be described as your core. It is the part of you that has always been- it is the same now as when you where born- it is You.

**Example A :** The Container and the Content:

In this examples I use simplifying images to give a clear picture of how we can use and treat our being as an instrument. If we view our being as a container, it is easy to see how it canbecome overloaded.



# CLEAN

***Let go of the changing parts of your being and direct all your concentration to the unchanging core.***

Most musicians have experienced that when they go on stage, all unnecessary information (e.g. pain, thoughts, worries) can disappear from their being because of their absolute presence. The absolute presence is a sort of “key” which makes our “container” seem empty.

The cleaning process is a way to access consciously a state of present effortlessness and concentration. When we are present we can listen into other vibrations than our own- we are open and can receive.

**Example B:** Transparency:



Cleaning makes our being more transparent and clears space.

**Transparency meditation:**

Find a comfortable position. Close your eyes and direct your concentration inward. Listen to your breath, and after a while lead your concentration to the unfolding of the musical universe. Give the musical universe the form of a big house where every piece and style has its own room. When you see this house in front of you, you are filled with love and gratitude. To honor and respect this special house, you do not merely take off your shoes, but you leave your mental and physical “clothing” at the door. You take it off bit by bit and let it fall to the

ground; let go of your plans, memories, fears, opinions, worries and pain. Free yourself from the condition your upbringing marked you with, and all the opinions of your teachers. Take it all off, piece by piece, and direct your concentration to your unchanging core. Look for the most pure state you can reach - somewhere you do not seriously have any wishes or ambitions, thoughts or images. They might float by, but you leave them floating for now, and do not identify with them. You don't want to be someone and you don't want to create anything - you simply are.

## Tune

From this basic state of "I am" your listening is pure and effortless.

***1. Listen to the essence of what you want to play, listen between the notes, beyond surface associations***

***2. Adjust your being to support the music. Start by opening the empathic space in you, a space with what I call emotional acoustics. It is a space where any essence can unfold and any essence can be heard.***

### **Tuning-exercises:**

1. Clean. Tune into your own being and play
2. Clean. Tune into a chosen state of mind or emotion (e.g. joy, curiosity, anger) and play
3. Clean. Tune into a painting or artwork and play
4. Clean. Listen to a composition while playing it. When you finish, maintain silence. Listen to the resonance of the music in you. Maybe you see an image or a colour, you feel a mood or you get a physical sensation connected to the impact of the music. Whatever it might be that you receive, locate and describe it. Repeat the exercise with intervals.

When the essence starts to take shape you can save it as an essence setting for the chosen piece. You can do so both mentally and through physical anchoring. As you do the exercise you may locate the "feel" of the piece in a part of your body. If

so, you can knock on that part with your fingers while listening to how the essence of the piece resounds in you.

When you want to do the exercise or simply play the piece again, knock the chosen place on your body to tune into the essence setting.

*Practical Tip: You can expand the “transparency meditation” through placing the essence setting in a room. After doing the cleaning you enter that room - smell it, sense it, listen into it, maybe knock on the anchoring point of your body. In this way, the cleaning and tuning unify and you don’t necessarily need much time to prepare before playing.*

## Audience

Depending on the circumstances, it may support the music to invite the audience to take active part at the concert. Through sharing your essence setting with the audience, or by asking them to lead their concentration in a given direction, their beings, too, can resonate as instruments and the essence of the music can potentialize.

## WORKING WITH “**BE** THE MUSIC”

Both the observing of what our being influences and the learning of “playing” my being as an instrument have shown me a further dimension to music making. It is quite a challenging dimension, but definitely enriching. It expands our being as well as the space of music. I want to invite you all to listen to this dimension of music making and feel free to discover all sorts of methods and techniques to get there. There are endless possibilities at hand and as Karlheinz Stockhausen wrote in his piece “Arrival”: “You can transform all vibrations of the world into sounds”

For those who want more guidance on how to “be the music”, I give private masterclasses in Basel, workshops and video consulting (e.g. to personalise your own cleaning method). It is open to all instrumentalists and conductors and available all year round. You can choose the repertoire and a modus which fits you (1-5 days with 2-3 hours of lessons per day). More information at my homepage or at the FB group Be The Music.