



**Foundation  
for Motor development  
Niek Brouw**

**Newsletter July 2025**

*"What can I do?" you probably ask yourself sometimes. In these times, when the outside world is harsh and depressing.*

*Little more than 'being' and freeing yourself, saying goodbye to your own unconscious envy and thus allowing your genetic shock to dissolve.*

*You can be this creative contribution.*

*A major inner task for all of us, which probably won't be finished tomorrow.*

### **Archive**

Step-by-step progress is still being made in developing the archive. New items are being added, and tapes of Niek's courses, for which we didn't have the text, are being listened to and transcribed.

### **The progress of the new therapists**

As we wrote in the previous newsletter, the first therapists are working alongside an experienced therapist. More will likely join after the summer. Two new people have also started. It's good to hear that Niek's work is being continued in this way by a larger group.

### **The English translation of 'Only a thief has something to hide'**

The English translation of 'A thief' is now about  $\frac{3}{4}$  complete. We are hopeful that the final version can be published before the end of the year. Hanneke and Valerie have now found a wonderful translation collaboration to capture the feeling and soul of Niek's original text towards English. They are receiving support from Julie Waters, a therapist in Oakland (California).

### **The ESTA-congress**

The European String Teachers Association (ESTA) held its annual congress in Amersfoort at the end of May.

Hanneke Bakker gave a workshop in English about Niek's work and practiced exercises together with Bruno Treipl. They also worked individually with visitors by registration. Several of these people have now become regular visitors to the practice. Hanneke hopes to expand on this, both individually and in her "Tune your body" course.

The following article appeared in the ESTA-magazine Arco, preceding the congress:

# Tune Your Body

## Making music from head to toe.

*Every string player tunes their instrument every time it's going to be played, and does that also apply to your physical instrument, your body? **Hanneke Bakker** and **Bruno Treipl** are more than happy to answer this question with a resounding YES. Hanneke offers a glimpse into the possibilities and considers every person as a unique individual with a unique movement pattern. Time for a preview of their Tune Your Body workshop.*

Both Hanneke and Bruno derive this perspective on uniqueness from the Motor development by physician Niek Brouw (1943-2024), simply called Motor development Niek Brouw. Both Hanneke and Bruno joined his practice in The Hague in the early 1990s. And as ambassadors of Developmental Motor Skills Niek Brouw, they work on "a free posture." In this respect, every person is unique, and there is absolutely no standard posture with standard motor skills, but rather a posture and motor skills appropriate for each individual. This, in turn, is determined by their unique physical development history. An adult is fully balanced when physical development has progressed safely through all stages (from embryo to fully grown adult). This process is different for everyone, and that makes everyone a unique case.

Hanneke: "Any unconscious physical tensions that may have accumulated in the body, which the person in question often doesn't feel, but which are certainly present, cause blockages and unnecessary energy consumption. In the long run, this can lead to injuries with the associated limitation of expression. Ideally, with optimal free posture and motor skills, you, especially as a musician, also have optimal expressive possibilities at your disposal, and the inner musician can fully blossom."

### Mind Soulbody Spirit Model (MSbSp)

Furthermore, the Niek Brouw Developmental Motor Skills team uses several models, one of which is interesting in the context of your conference theme: the Mind Soulbody Spirit model:

M: stands for doing, knowing, limbs, and shaping;

Sb: stands for substantive feeling, emotions, and the torso;

Sp: stands for spontaneity, inspiration, flow, and your spinal column.

Hanneke: "These are the so-called three human potentials that you can experience in your inner world, which the inner musician can express in the outer world. And these three human potentials (MSbSP) are (as you can read above) linked to certain muscle systems in the body, not to mention your spinal column. And the freer you are, the better your expressiveness, the more in balance you are with yourself."

### Muscle Chain and Postural Reflex

Hanneke: "Another important concept in the context of your conference is 'muscle chain.' As children grow, different muscles, muscle chains, become active. Until the age of six, a child uses most of their sensory muscles, then, during primary school, the formative muscle chains are added, and during puberty, the spontaneous muscles are developed. Then the principle of uniqueness comes into play again, which states that every person is unique, because the relationship between these three muscle chains is different for everyone. If the muscle chains don't work well together, an imbalance can arise, resulting in physical and/or mental complaints." Hanneke: "The last concept I want to mention is the postural reflex, which is related to your own self-support. As a baby, you naturally transition from lying to standing. This happens automatically, without any external help, via what we call the postural reflex. This natural ability is no longer consciously apparent to most people, which means we tense far too many muscles to keep ourselves upright. This costs us a lot of energy and makes us unstable when standing and moving. In this context, we also work on ground contact, which is an absolute prerequisite for stability. Musicians are often focused on higher things and therefore run the risk of losing contact with themselves and with the ground. From ground contact, we do exercises, but we also especially focus on feeling the effects of those exercises on us. It's a misconception that only part of our body makes music; no, all muscles participate, both active and passive. You're there from head to toe!"

### On our website

The three Vitaal therapists are now listed separately on our website to showcase their specializations.

### United States - Netherlands

Rob Erteman visited the Netherlands in May. His work with animals using developmental motor skills is fascinating; we were able to witness a session with two horses.

### The psoas muscle

Bruno is developing a new website about the psoas and the courses he will be teaching. As soon as it's online, we'll post a link on our own website.

We wish you a pleasant summer and hope to see you in the fall.

Kind regards,

*Valerie van Burk, Rens Looij and Mim van der Meij*

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