

Sound Creation

the transformational
properties of sound

We are hearing more and more about sound being used as a healing, transformational tool to enhance both our spiritual and physical well-being. I know my work as a spiritual and personal awareness facilitator has certainly become almost exclusively sound orientated - I suppose since I met the great gong!

By ROZ
CRAMPTON

My whole life has been filled with sound and music, from my first ballet class at six to a career as a professional dancer, dance teacher and choreographer. Looking back I see how the music touched my soul and freed my spirit - it was the music flowing through me, moving my body and manifesting itself through the dance.

Then I added fitness classes to my teaching schedule and was able to see even broader effects of sound and music on people. Using the beat of the music to keep everyone together paces the exercise and energises the class. There's a great feeling when everyone's united by the sound.

A HEALING PATH

But working with sound for transformation and healing really started for me after I attended a shamanic course working extensively with the drum. I remember the first time I picked up the drum and

played, working with the rhythm of the heartbeat.

In our mother's womb we hear two heartbeats, our own and our mother's. At birth we lose the second heartbeat, so when we link with a second heartbeat again through the drum it feels reassuring, nurturing, a feeling of belonging again - and for most people this is a very emotional experience as we re-connect with the all-encompassing mother - the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

The emotion that I felt was beyond words, and my heart ached with the



Ancient peoples knew that music and sound deeply affect the body, mind and spirit. We are just beginning to realise the profound scientific, medical, psychological and spiritual questions involved in the power of sound

Don Campbell

feeling of coming home. My tears flowed for the whole week as we worked every day with the drum, feeling incredibly re-connected.

At one point on this course ten people, including myself, sat in a circle whilst seventy drummers made an outer circle and drummed continuously for twenty minutes. I was taken very quickly into an altered state where I had powerful visionary experiences. In one of these, Native Americans danced vigorously around a fire and I remember moving my legs as one of them came so close I thought he would tread on me. One dancer's regalia depicted a white buffalo and, talking of my experience later, I was told by a Native American tutoring on the course that this was a ritual dance performed only by his tribe.

I also clearly 'saw' another Native American standing just to the right of me. He looked at me and spoke for some time, explaining so much about my present life and my previous lives, enabling me to have a deep and profound understanding of so much in my past and giving great meaning to what was in store.

Even at night I would wake up sweating profusely after very vivid dreaming. My body went on a deep cleanse and my spirit came alive in a way I had never experienced before. The drum was the instigator of this whole experience.

After this I felt I had to bring the drum into my work and have worked extensively with the drum

ever since. I have now added in the Gong, Native American Flute, Himalayan singing bowls, bells, didgeridoo and djembe drum. Once you start on this sound journey there seems nothing can stop you from collector mania and playing anything from a gong to a tin can!

SANCTUARY OF SOUND

I have a purpose-built sanctuary at the top of my garden, used for this work alone, which intrigues friends, work colleagues and family alike. All the instruments are set out beautifully, including large 'planet' gongs, drums, bowls, flutes, bells... and of course my inquisitive visitors ask what I do with them. When this question comes I simply play them the instruments, as no words can possibly match the experience of being immersed in this sacred, indigenous, ancient sound. The instruments speak for themselves first, and then I can explain a little more about the therapeutic and healing effects of sound.

One time this happened when our carpenter friend Chris, was working in our house. He is a real sceptic, but after experiencing just a few minutes of the gong's deep resonant sound, he was astounded at what he could feel in his body. He had previously injured his ankle playing football and alongside the other effects throughout his body, he could feel the gong's deep tones resonating right through his ankle. At first the ankle hurt, whilst the energy trapped there was freed up, then it felt so much better. I will

never forget the look on his face when he left our house agreeing wholeheartedly to come to the next 'gong bath' session.

Many people have had very similar experiences with the gong, including someone who had suffered all their life with severe eczema. The eczema manifested itself quite badly during the gong bath, but disappeared totally the next day and has not come back since. Babies also have a great response to the sound. My partner's four-month-old nephew, Finn, was really upset and his parents wanted to calm him before their journey home. I suggested a mini gong bath, and after just a few minutes of playing he totally relaxed and fell asleep. He apparently slept for the whole two hour journey home and beyond!

Animals certainly enjoy the sounds. We have had birds, deer, horses - to mention but a few - join us to bathe in the sounds of the Native American flute and have also worked with the gong with rescued horses at a horse sanctuary. No one had been able to get anywhere near one of the horses that had been abused by humans, but when he heard the gong he came up very close to investigate. Considering the field we were in covered about forty acres, and he was free to be wherever he wanted, that was quite something. In the New Forest we played the gong for the horses there, including two of our friend's stallions, White Tail and Oakey. They stood very close by us and went completely relaxed.

POWER OF GONGS

The oldest known gongs date back 5,000 years and originate in Asia. Gongs are made of a combination of metals beaten into a rounded



shape and suspended on a frame. A number of different companies currently make gongs, but I work almost exclusively with gongs made by Paiste, a German company best known for their cymbals, which are used by many well-known rock and pop groups. Through Paiste's fine craftsmanship their gongs have a more refined and powerful resonant sound.

The gongs are made of bronze alloy materials consisting of approximately 75% copper, 20% tin and 5% nickel. They produce all the sound within our hearing range and beyond. Nickel is thought to be the key element that helps make the sound spiritual in nature, creating transcendental energy.

Some Paiste gongs have been manufactured to represent the vibrational frequencies of many of our solar planets, as calculated by the Swiss mathematician and musicologist Hans Cousto. In 1978 Cousto found that different planets produce different tones and these influence the earth's natural life frequencies. He went on to produce tuning forks that represented the frequencies of each of the planets. Paiste use tuning forks based on these principles to help create their 'planetary' gongs.

According to Buddhist lore, gong tone, felt in the heart as musical resonance, is the return of Maitraya.

THE GONG BATH

One of the most effective ways of experiencing the power of the gong is through a gong 'bath'. Typically, the participant will lie on a soft padded mat, either covered with a blanket or wrapped up in a sleeping bag, like a cocoon or chrysalis before the awakening, or transformation into a butterfly.

After a brief introduction there may be a series of breathing techniques to enhance relaxation and, or a visualisation. Sometimes we use the voice before the bath, perhaps in the form of a mantra, as a mantra has its own invocation and this can help the participants to focus on intention if that particular sound bath has a theme. As the voice is our internal gong, it helps the body to become more finely tuned and receptive, and using controlled breathing patterns helps to create a heightened state of awareness. Depending on the group and intentions of the gong bath we may just begin in silence.

The gong is the main instrument in the sound bath, but we also use others. We tend to begin the bath with the drum, flute and didgeridoo as these are the 'earth' instruments. As the bath progresses we use the gong, bowls, bells, etc. which bring an expanding and more cosmic energy. The earth instruments are used again towards the end to help complete the bath and bring people gently back into their bodies. However, all gong baths are played intuitively, so no two are the same, and each person's experience is unique.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

I have worked consciously with intuition and also worked as a medium for over twenty years which I feel prepared me well for this work. The stronger the player's intuition and their ability to work in these heightened states the more powerful the gong bath is.

Having an ability to be 'in tune' with the recipients enhances sensitivity to the effects each sound may have. If players are able to blend, on a higher vibration, with the people receiving the gong bath, then they are more open to be guided by the needs of the group. When working in this altered state the ego can drop away and the instruments 'play the players'.

I experience this as the sound moving right through me; my body vibrates like the instruments I'm playing and I become the sound. There is no thinking involved, just feeling and listening with my whole body. I am intuitively drawn to an instrument, I pick it up and it just seems to play. It's an amazing sensation feeling the different sounds weaving, maybe dancing with each other for a short time and then hearing their beautiful echoes slowly fading into infinity.

When playing the gong my arms seem to move on their own accord, as if guided by a higher intelligence, the mallets strike the gong with differing volumes and intensities, moving freely around its whole surface and homing in on some of the 'sweet spots' - the most resonant parts of the gong.

The ebb and flow of the vibrations emanating in all directions from the gong's entire surface envelop you in total sound. When two tones of equal amplitude combine, they produce offspring, or 'progeny' tones. These resulting overtones also combine to





At the root of all power and motion, there is music and rhythm, the play of patterned frequencies against the matrix of time. Before we make music, music makes us

George Leonard

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Roz Crampton
Roz is a spiritual and personal development facilitator and has over 20 years of experience leading a wide range of workshops and retreats, nationally and internationally, to develop personal and Spiritual awareness. She works extensively with the healing resonance of sound, incorporating the Shamanic drum, Native American flute, singing bowls and the gong to facilitate personal change, transformation and as a way of enhancing people's life energy and their ability to express and communicate. Roz is the founder of 'Earthdance' and co-founder of 'Gong Camp' - sound healing arts gathering

www.earthdance.gb.com
www.gongcamp.org

produce further resulting tones. This is very much like a family tree where by two people come together to create their offspring, and their offspring have offspring of their own, and so on. In sacred geometry these resulting tones are called *heterodynes*. In simple terms, when one or more gongs are played the resulting sounds keep expanding continuously

filling the room, surrounding and penetrating the body.

MOVING ENERGY

During the bath you can sense the musical vibration within all the cells of the body. The gong produces a whole spectrum of harmonics based on pressure waves which resonate through the meridian lines of the body, vibrating and bringing them into balance. This can cause discomfort if energy is blocked due to disease or injury; for instance the area may feel hot or cold, but this soon passes as the imbalance is corrected and the energy is moved. Muscle twitching can also happen as the blockages are cleared or as the Kundalini energy that begins at the base of the spine is released travelling upwards along the spine through the body.

People describe the feeling of their bodies being broken down and then re-built - which is what we feel the gong does. It seems to anatomically blow us apart, then reconstruct us back to our original blueprint.

Being immersed in the deep sound of the gong, the senses of hearing and feeling - the body becomes a big ear - can bring you into a blissful state, or the completely neutral yogic state of *Turiya*. The long rolling waves of sustained fundamental tones and overtones create dissonant sound.

Because of the randomness of the sound the brain has no set pattern to follow and, after much searching, gives up and allows the whole body to let go. Then you can really move beyond your physicality and become totally attuned to the real self.

It is within this state that people have experienced powerful intuitions and strong visionary experiences, for instance being shown ways of resolving certain negative aspects in their life, or being given direction in uncertainties or sometimes simply knowing they are on the right track with something.

People can also have very vivid visual and sensual experiences. This can feel like the sea rushing over your body, or being deep within the ocean. Some have described the sensation of swimming with dolphins and hearing whale sounds. Others have told of becoming an animal, or being an eagle flying through the air, floating in space and seeing spectacular colours.

Many people meet visionary guides who take them to particular places and sometimes reveal important information about their lives. Others again have experienced past lives and met with people that have already passed over.

SUN GONG TEACHER

One vivid personal experience involved watching what I thought was a UFO spinning at great speed above me and gradually getting closer and closer. As it did I realised that in fact it was the great Sun Gong. From it came the most beautiful golden rain that I could feel gently covering my body until I eventually merged with the gong totally. When I awoke the Sun Gong was right in front of me and we became involved in philosophical dialogue. From this I came to realise that for me the gong was a supreme cosmic intelligence, and a profound teacher. I have kept this relationship with the gong ever since as we continue our work together.

SOUND CREATION

Working with a group of people intuitively interweaving sounds from a range of instruments including the voice, is a powerful experience for all. This 'sacred sound ensemble' encourages a heightened awareness of each other and a feeling of unity, whilst enhancing the player's ability to really listen. My colleague Stefan Cartwright and I have termed this 'Sound Creation' - spiritual freedom through sound and music.

Stefan also comes from a background in music and is a teacher of Yoga Nada - the yoga of sound. We blend both our musical experiences to create a space with sound and music for people to explore themselves, each other and their inter-connectedness with all things physical and non-physical, bringing them to a place of freedom and inner peace.

The participants of Sound Creation need no formal musical training as these sessions create a field of resonant sound that can be both dissonant and harmonic in nature. Stefan and I work with the participants beforehand to enhance playing skills of these ancient instruments and the voice.

We have found these sessions liberate creativity and profoundly increase the participants' confidence to express themselves, being a part of the whole. This in turn empowers both their individuality and their ability to interact.

Stefan and I know through our own amazing experiences in this field that sound undoubtedly has a profound affect on every aspect of our being, for everyone involved. We continue to explore and to share this positive, profound, life-changing and transformational journey of sound.

