

Good Vibrations

Writer Danielle Rippingale

If you live in a city, the near constancy of sounds of every kind can leave you frazzled and longing for the precious moments that offer silence and peace. While our reactions may vary depending on our mood and preferences, there is no doubt that sound has a profoundly powerful effect on our entire being. We can be at once soothed by the voice of a loved one, our favourite music and the sound of nature; and then instantly agitated by a loud voice, startling noise or unpleasant music.



Science has long recognised that everything including ourselves, are made of vibrating molecules of energy, and where there is movement of energy there is vibration and vice versa. “The human body has a resonant frequency, or energetic signature, that is woven from the many elements of the body (water, minerals, etc) and creates an orchestrated symphony of tones that make up the physical form,” says Ken McKelvie, health and well-being writer. Not surprisingly, because sound is also a vibration, we naturally respond to its frequency and resonance. This becomes clearer when we consider that our body is at least 70 per cent water – a medium that is able to resonate sound vibration and thus influence the cellular make-up of our entire body. In other words, we hear sound with our ears but we ‘feel’ sound with every cell in the body.

Sound as a healing tool may seem fairly new, but prehistoric instruments like drums and rattles are likely evidence of sound healing in early recorded history. Sound healing practices can be found, but not limited to, Buddhists, Sufis, Native Americans, Hindus, Shamans and Catholic monks, and they all recognise that like nature, the human body also seeks harmony. Shifting our perception to the dynamics of energy around and within us can be challenging, however sound vibration has the ability to bypass the ‘how to’ of our rational thinking mind and clear energetic pathways within our body without us even knowing it. This allows us to access positive thoughts, emotions and ways of being in the world with more ease.

We all have a need to be deeply heard and witnessed, and the extraordinary power of our voice offers an essential opportunity to move towards transformation and healing. We are all born with free and beautiful voices, however experiences in life can lead us to lose confidence and limit expression through our voice. Psychotherapist and yoga teacher, Dawn Rabey, believes that it is difficult to access one’s personal power and heal wounds until the voice is accessed and freed. Once we are heard, we are able

OM BOWL/THINKSTOCK

to create new experiences and vibrations that support us to live authentically.

It is the power of our voice to heal that led Orla Breeze to the sound healing technique, called Toning or Spontaneous Singing, more than ten years ago. Spontaneous Singing uses your own voice to resonate your body as an instrument for healing and transformation. Breeze holds Sound Meditation groups in Hong Kong where people come together to discover the power of self-created sounds to release and heal emotions, their spirit and physical body. As the name describes, it is spontaneous and thus free of preconceived ideas of what the sound should sound like or mean, unlike songs with words or mantra. Breeze believes that toning is one of the most transformational and easy-to-use healing mediums, because it doesn’t require any tools or musical instruments – only our voice, ears and intention. Toning can assist with finding your own voice, becoming more confident about using it and speaking up in ways that you never did before.

From her healing retreat centre in northern Thailand, Katarina Bless is surely inspired by the symphony of healing sounds that surround her in nature. For over 20 years, Bless has used crystal bowls to open the heart to healing and a deeper connection with life. Made from 99.99 per cent pure crushed quartz crystals and heated to 4,000 degrees before being shaped, the size and density of the bowl determines its powerful tone and exquisite resonance. The frequency of the crystal bypasses the intellect and amplifies and vibrates energy directly into the cellular body and energy field on waves of sound, activates, clears and balances the chakras and stimulates the body’s natural healing response. Like a symphony of cicadas, simultaneously played bowls harmonise with each other and guide the very rhythms of your body to move in resonance with them.

During individual healing sessions, small blown crystal bowls are selected for their appropriate tone and placed on the body’s main energy centres (chakras) to activate and release blocked energy. Bless’s beautiful “Crystal Sounds for Daily Living” and “Gaia Puja” CDs will wash over and

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~ Patrizius Wolfgang



Colourful SomaEnergetics Tuning Forks for a rainbow of experiences

through you, lulling you into dreamtime as the sound resonance and subsequent release of emotions fuels your dreams.

Tip: Play in the evening or as you sleep to promote deep and restful sleep.

Taught and used by Tibetan lamas, monks and shamans, the ancient healing of Tibetan singing bowls is said to date back 5,000 years, although more recently introduced to the West after World War II with the Tibetan emigration wave. Like their crystal counterparts, Tibetan singing bowls are placed and played on and around the recipient’s clothed body to harmonise the cells, relieve tension and blockages in the body.

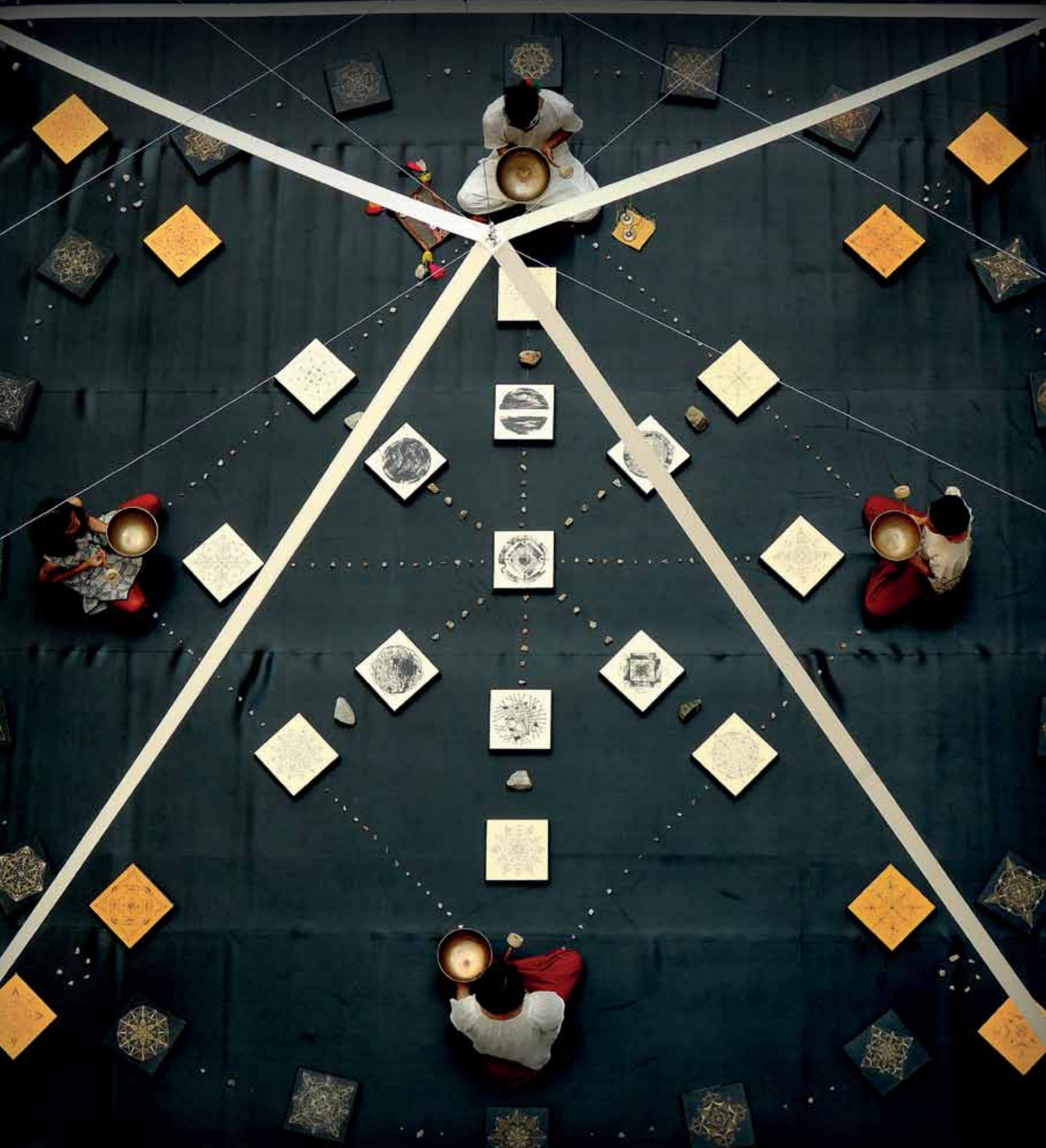
July Huang, Tibetan singing bowl practitioner in Zürich, Switzerland, explains that the bowls are “traditionally hand-forged

amongst ceremony and prayers, using a variety of metals and elements representing the earth and the power of different planets in the universe.” Depending on the size, weight and percentage of the various metals, each bowl has its own personality, as expressed through its unique tone. She vividly recalls the day she was guided by her teacher to select her first set of healing bowls according to her heart and ears, rather than with her eyes.

Huang studied with Master Sound Therapist, Patrizius Wolfgang in Bali, where the bowls are made by a Balinese Hindu priest in accordance with Himalayan traditions. Reminded of the infinite potential of her intuition and the power of the bowls, she does her treatments freely, trusting her sensitivity to energy, intention, and knowledge of sounds and energy fields. With a deep sense of peace and lightness in your being, the treatment leaves you with an increased awareness of the patterns that hinder your evolution and where your wellness lies.

Patrizius Wolfgang allows the changing vibrations of his Tibetan singing bowls and large Balinese gongs to tell him about the person being treated and how to use them to activate their deepest self-healing abilities and raise awareness about the source of their physical, emotional or spiritual imbalances. With a background in psychology, Wolfgang reminds us that “we are the most complex vibrational body of all, and a simple instrument like the bowls may help us to listen to this complex vibrational body” and open the door to spiritual integration. The benefits vary from person to person, however Wolfgang believes that in order to have a lasting effect and be “vibrationally complete”, the essential conversations held immediately after a treatment are paramount to understanding what the body seems to express and how to approach it on a conscious level. Visitors to Bali can benefit from Wolfgang’s teachings to spa therapists at the beautiful Alila Villas Soori, as well as from his own practice in Ubud.

Although Wolfgang specialises in sound healing, using metal Tibetan bowls, he feels that Tibetan bowls are more general in their



application and can induce a much deeper relaxation than the crystal bowls. He feels the sharper expression of crystal is less expressive on the body than metal, but in the hands of a good therapist they may be able to address specific issues more directly.

The healing effects of sound are not just some New Age claim, scientists and medical professionals have studied the effects with impressive findings. Medical research worldwide has discovered numerous physiological benefits of sound healing, including its ability to increase immune functioning and the brain waves associated with relaxation; lower blood pressure, heart rate, and stress-related hormones; and release of endorphins that work as natural pain relievers.

An emerging field of sound healing uses tuning forks and according to Hong Kong-based Allpamama Healing Circle therapists, Man-tung Tsang and Wai-yi Tsang, is so precise on the subtle energy anatomy that it is akin to acupuncture. Using SomaEnergetics Tuning Forks, the chakras are activated and cleared, using six forks of different pitches, with the seventh or crown chakra receiving the vibrational frequency of all six forks. Energy is raised up the body's energy channels by the high-pitched forks, while low-pitched forks ground the energy to earth. Resonating with the primordial sound, the 'Om fork' centres, clears and balances when placed on the body and acupuncture points. The first to introduce SomaEnergetics healing to Asia, Tsang awes spectators at his sound healing performances with the exquisite beauty of his movements and the healing benefits of his instruments.

Sound also has the power to support and amplify other healing therapies, as the work of sound healing pioneer Steven Halpern demonstrates. Initially inspired by the soothing pentatonic (five note) scale of ancient China, Halpern recognised that music, which lacks a strong rhythm encourages deeper breathing that enables the body to attune to its most natural relaxed state. This discovery led to the first of many sound healing compositions to be recorded

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in 1975. Famous for that delicious 'melt into music' feeling, his most popular albums "Chakra Suite", "Music for Sound Healing", and "Relaxation Suite" promise to release tensions in the body and mind.

Halpern has worked with some of the most gifted musicians of healing sound over the years, including Argentina-born master flautist, Jorge Alfano who draws upon the healing musical traditions of ancient cultures from around the world. Alfano's study of sacred sounds weaves a colourful tapestry of vibrational healing, using instruments and spiritual disciplines that authentically guide listeners to relaxation, as well as physical and spiritual well-being. In 2013, the Mandarin Oriental spas will marry holistic spa treatments with the healing sounds of Alfano's newest collection, "Quintessence", that is based on the Chinese Five Element Theory. He reminds us that the "most important ingredient for healing is the intention with what this energy is used."

In a world dominated by spoken language, the art of listening and sound vibration are so powerful that sound healers from traditions around the world profess it can not only transform and heal ourselves, but also the world. This sentiment is echoed by sound healer and writer, Jonathan Goldman, who believes the principles of sound healing lie in "frequency + intent (love) = healing". So whether you are drawn to ancient or modern traditions of sound healing, one thing is for sure – you will expand in awareness and hear the world, as you never did before. 🌿



THIS PAGE: Man-tung Tsang in Mother Nature's embrace. OPPOSITE PAGE: Finding the body's balance through sound

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