

LIGHTWORKS

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The Monthly Aspectarian

DEDICATED TO AWAKENING CONSCIOUSNESS

NOVEMBER 2007

Volume 29, No. 3





Sound Perspectives

by Steven Halpern

New Dimensions of Healing with Sound

I've just returned from the second international conference of "Cymatics: The science of sound and vibrational healing," and if you are interested in any aspect of music, sound and health, you'll want to check out the DVDs of this event. In addition to presenting historical overviews of the work of Dr. Hans Jenny, Dr. Peter Manners, and other pioneers, breaking news with respect to current research was shared by Elizabeth Bauer, RN, Dr. David Lee and Dr. Anthony Fleming.

You'll probably read about these breakthroughs in a year or so in other newspaper and magazine articles, but if you're like me, you want to know about new information as soon as possible. Most of the presentations were recorded, and you can check out the offerings at www.cymatherapy.com.

You may recall that I wrote about the field of cymatics last year at this time, and how an interesting coincidence brought me in contact with the contemporary incarnation of the research I first learned about in England when I spoke at the first Festival of Mind, Body and Spirit. With very little fanfare or publicity, Dr. Peter Guy Manners was quietly helping thousands of patients over many decades heal from arthritis and many other physical ailments. He used a device that produced audible sound frequencies, which were then transmitted directly into the body by placing the "applicator" on the surface of the skin.

The secret, of course, was in knowing which frequencies to use. And that, of course, was not shared. At this conference, that mystery was front and center at the well-deserved tribute to

Dr. Manners held on Saturday night. No one seems to know how these frequencies were discovered: perhaps measuring the frequency of a particular muscle or organ, perhaps trial and error.

Whatever that may be, the proof is in the pudding, as it were. The techniques worked in Dr. Manners' clinic.

Dr. Manners is now retired, and for a while it seemed like this incredible sound technology would be lost. Fortunately, that is not the case. An American team of researchers, designers and business people have improved upon the original designs and taken the technology into the new millennium.

Taking a Look at the Record

One of the questions that always comes up in any healing modality is, "how do you know it works?"

With many situations, the results may take a while, and even then it's not always clear how much was due to a particular modality. But when anecdote after anecdote was shared by practitioners in which patients experienced immediate pain cessation, for instance, that was impressive.

Even more dramatic were the before and after photos of "cymatics facials" presented by Elizabeth Bauer. Standard photography showed a clear difference in the treated side of the face from the untreated side. Infrared thermography clearly showed increased blood flow, which demonstrated at least one of the ways that the treatment achieved its beneficial effects. Clearly there are many other factors.

Given that the phenomenal growth of medical spas, day spas, and so many

other products for home use are targeted at helping us look and feel better, wouldn't it be funny if the "quiet revolution" in the use of therapeutic sound and music comes through helping people's faces look better? Then, perhaps, the larger implications and potential of sound would be explored.

Consider all the ads you may have seen for various kinds of light therapy for facials and other uses: red lights, infra-red lights, lasers, etc. Well, according to the above-mentioned research, because sound vibrations are in the same octave range as our physical cells, it makes conceptual sense that they might have a more pronounced "physical" effect than light frequencies, which are about forty octaves higher. In my opinion, we need all the options we can get. Why limit oneself to only one approach?

Sacred Space, Sacred Sound

One of the other highlights was the presentation by Susan Elizabeth Hale, based on her new book, *Sacred Space, Sacred Sound: The Acoustic Mysteries of Holy Places* (Quest Books). She writes, "Ancient people recognized the importance of sound and sought out resonant caves to perform rituals ... to hear ourselves and Spirit more clearly, and to create relationship between the seen and the unseen worlds within and around us. The voice itself is a cathedral. We are sound chambers resonating with the One Song."

Exploring how sound interacts with sacred space and architecture, Susan takes us on a journey through France, England, the Templar-built Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland (which was featured

in the *Da Vinci Code*), and many other sacred sites. You may recall that I reviewed Freddy Silva's work on sacred sites, sound harmonics, and crop circles previously. This book continues in expanding our awareness of the long tradition based on sound that we are finally recognizing for what it is—a profound tool for attuning to the divine and to our higher nature.

One of the common characteristics of many of these places is that they heighten the phenomenon of reverberation and echo. As a musician, I have always been fascinated by their effects on me, and my music has always place an honored awareness of these factors in the mix.

When I was conducting my graduate research, I was surprised and delighted to find that there was a considerable body of philosophical and spiritual literature addressing this phenomenon. A deeper mystery is suggested when we hear an echo of an original sound. It implies the existence of another world, and gives us a

glimpse of a world beyond the limitations of our senses.

I believe that the enhanced dimensionality of sound may activate certain preprogrammed responses in our cells and consciousness. It will be interesting to see what future research discovers. In the meanwhile, seek out highly resonant areas for yourself and feel the buzz.

Reading further, you'll explore how different religious traditions used sound, and especially the voice. Susan Hall covers Gregorian chant, overtone chanting, Hindu mantra and other expressions. All in all, her presentation, and the book, give you the tools to find your own sacred voice. I think you'll find it a worthwhile addition to your library.

Also recommended, of course, is the beautifully printed book, *Cymatics*, by Dr. Hans Jenny. Ask your local bookstore to order it for you. And visit my website for more information on the DVDs that demonstrate cymatics more eloquently than mere words can,

especially *Cymatics Soundscapes: Bringing Matter to Life*.

When I first encountered the book and film in 1977, I tried, unsuccessfully to get the rights to publish them. For many years, both the book and the filmed footage were unavailable, until Jeff Volk succeeded in getting the publishing rights and making them available to everyone at long last.

Until next time, stay tuned, and enjoy the changing tones of autumn!

© 2007 Steven Halpern. In an earlier incarnation as a jazz-rock trumpet player and guitarist, Steven Halpern performed with bands at large festivals in New York, Chicago, Miami, San Diego and San Francisco. His most recent release, *Drum Spirit*, honors the power of rhythm and trance-formation. Hear samples at www.stevenhalpern.com.

