

# SOUNDING BOWLS

## A New Instrument of Healing

*Sounding Bowls are a unique and modern instrument used in hospices and healing centres across the world. Within a Sounding Bowl bronze wound strings are stretched across richly figured Cherry, Sycamore or Ash wood whose notes resound from spiral section curves to enfold the player in a unique bud-shape of sound. These notes are from their maker, Tobias Kaye.*

My passion as a wood turner has always been to transform the beauty that trees offer us in their own shapes and material so that the forms I bring to it as a human artist harmonise with what they intrinsically offer.

After years of searching for a harmonious balance in this creative act I found audible harmony resounding from within the bowl forms I was creating.

Unsure how best to bring out this innate harmony I wracked my brains without result. Then one night while meditating an image of a bowl stretching a tuned string within it appeared before me. This was the true origin of the Sounding Bowls, now identified by EMI magazine as unique in the history of world music. Fitting the first string to a wooden bowl was like seeing life being breathed into it. Music, like flame is a mystery. One minute I had the smoke of a rich tonal echo, the next it burst into song. The song pursued me through many versions, in which I sought the balance between “Instrument” and “Sculpture”, trying to hold the space between.



The circle has always contained magic for human beings. From stone circles through round temples to crop circles, and from goddess cauldrons through circle dancing to the holy grail we have images of circle magic going beyond our comprehension through all of our history. In a Sounding Bowl the taut string gives a contrast to this circle that brings harmony like my earlier work sought to harmonise human and natural form.



Soon musicians and therapists appeared amongst my customers. Feedback from hospice and care homes told of people whom ordinary music therapy was unable to reach responding in deep ways to Sounding Bowls. Sometimes the song of the therapist together with the sound of the bowl could reach into someone’s coma, bringing comfort as a person moves into the next life. Other times it might be an autistic child, unable to feel moved by any other instrument who reaches out to touch; to play; to question, through meeting a Sounding Bowl. Again it might be someone in a psychiatric prison who has not been

able to cry for years, finding their tears while clutching a Sounding Bowl. All these stories and many more have come to me through Sounding Bowls.

Those of us not pressed with quite such extreme life situations often seem to be asked ‘can we find the true genius within?’ the One whose musical flame can weave together the apparently disparate; harmonising our inner life with the demands of our daily life, so that the day becomes a creative gift in place of a dualist battle. Sounding Bowls are also now used as a tool for meditation. The note from a single string that stretches from within the bowl to it’s outside becomes a tool for imaging the sublime connection of our inner creator with the Creator of All. The single sound, fading can leave a space through which All can flow.



Two notes can be used to explore the “space between” that uniquely human experience of free choice, with all it’s pain and potential. Three notes can be used to explore the relationships of the Trinity or of the white, the red and the black aspects of the Goddess. Creating Sounding Bowls for these uses has become a regular part of my daily work.

Remarkable things happen in the workshop as in the field of use. Strange sorrows moving through me as I create one for a hospice, or desert winds seeming to blow through my workshop as I make one for work in the pyramids, a dead knot is revealed and removed from inside the wood as I make one for a client wrestling with many years of M.E. ~ Somehow a healing force is at work in the Sounding Bowls.



Whether the healing flows from the fact that a great deal of meditative love and care goes into each instrument, or whether it flows from the wood itself, given a chance to resound without joint or glue bond or whether it flows from the harmonised contrast of the hand carved texture of the underside, the smooth sanded inside and the soft curves with the taut straight line, I do not know but many, many testaments to the healing and uplifting effect of Sounding Bowls do come back to me.

