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### **The History & Application of Sound Healing Across the Globe, At a Glance**

Throughout history, we can find evidence of the use of sound as medicine in just about every corner of the globe. Though most of the ancient practices have been nearly lost in recent history, it would be extremely difficult to find a human being who disagrees with the fact that music and sound affect us on many levels. Yet, we are reaching a pivotal point in western society in which the practice of using sound as therapy and treatment for a very wide range of issues is becoming more readily accepted. I believe there is much to be learned from all of the ancient and traditional practices - those that are still preserved, as well as those that have been lost - as we graciously enter into this new age of what has previously only been regarded as "alternative" medicine.

It seems as though history depicts that the Didgeridoo (Yidaki), is regarded as one of the oldest (if not THE oldest) instruments used for sound healing. It is known that the Australian Aboriginals used the Yidaki in ceremonial rituals for healing, but they may have also used it for communication across long distances due to the unique sound waves that allegedly were believed to be able to be heard through the Earth.<sup>11</sup> These unique frequencies produced by the didgeridoo include both infrasound and ultrasound frequencies, which may indicate some scientific evidence to validate the aboriginals' use for the instrument in healing. The infrasound and ultrasound frequencies produced by the didgeridoo are frequencies that are used by practitioners for a wide range of muscular therapies. <sup>22</sup>

Throughout the indigenous cultures of North America, ceremonial music was a staple in daily life. Many instruments were used for healing purposes in their ceremonies and rituals including drums and flutes, but the human voice was always considered to be the most important instrument. These indigenous cultures used a method called "reciprocal participation" within their ceremonies that used a complex and interconnected musical exchange that ranges across nations and tribes. The American Indian Heritage Foundation states that "unusual, irregular rhythms and an off-key style of singing is used", that the songs are used to "invoke spirits, ask for [rain] or healing, or used to heal the sick", and that "many researchers believe Native American music to be some of the most complex ever performed". <sup>31</sup> Commonly, the songs or chants were introduced to the shamans in the realm of dreams, each with a specific purpose that usually involved some type of healing or invocation. <sup>43</sup>

In South and Central America, many of the traditional practices involving using sound for healing are still alive today. In recent times, more people are becoming aware of one

of the most prominent plant medicines used ceremonially in the Amazon, Ayahuasca. Though, there are many plant medicines used traditionally and ceremonially in these cultures. The indigenous people from these areas use healing songs called "Icaros" for medicinal purposes. The people work very closely with the plants, and often the plant spirits teach an Icaro to a "shaman" (often called a curandera/curandero). The icaros have an extremely wide range of purposes from invocations, to physical healing, to purging of physical or non-physical blockages, to spinal alignment, and so on. There exists an Icaro for just about anything you can think of. These icaros are ancient songs that carry consistent frequencies, transcending time. Many of the icaros that are still being used today are said to be thousands of years old.

Many people today are becoming aware of the possibility that the ancient Egyptians possessed extremely advanced knowledge of how to use sound to effectively heal the human body. They used a system of seven sacred vowels that created harmonic convergence, and they believed so strongly in the sanctity of sound that they did not incorporate vowels in their written language. 51 According to Abd'el Hakim Awyan, a late archaeologist and indigenous wisdom keeper who saw Egypt through the eyes of his ancestors, "Every chamber in the Great Pyramid has a specific harmonic, replicating the harmonics of the cavities of the human body. Sound [healing] techniques were then used to restore the patient's body to the correct harmonics." He also gives the example (referring to the Bent Pyramid of Sneferu in Dashur): "*Sen* means *double*, and *nefer* means *harmony*. The Bent Pyramid has two different chambers that produce two distinct sound frequencies that are amplified by the pyramid." 64

In traditional African cultures, there is a belief system that music is the "science of being; the art of living with health." It is widely believed that the human body is the essential sound instrument, and the soul is the ethereal melody. Thus, matching of the human souls is the foundation of African harmonic thought and sound, and dissonance occurs when independent melodies (souls) or tone/pitch levels fail to be in harmony with the cultures normal ways of interaction in life and music alike. So when souls (melodies) are in harmony with each other, this generates a healthy energy (resonance). When it comes to the African science of applying sound to health care, there is a reliance on understanding the properties of energy produced by various instruments, as well as the sonic properties that could engage dissonant energies in the body to restore them to their normal (healthy) resonance. The application of raw, natural harmonics is preferred overall when administering any type of musical sound healing. The various types of natural instruments used include: percussive instruments made of animal skin, wood, clay, shell and wind instruments made from animal or vegetable origin. These natural instruments are rich in natural harmonics, which are effective in healing. 75

The use of music as medicine was documented in China's first medical text that was written 2,300 years ago. Classical Chinese music was composed from five notes/sounds - jiao, zhi, gong, shang, yu - and was traditionally performed on instruments like drum, gong, flutes, or zither. Chinese medicine uses a system of relationships between internal

organs and five-element correspondences (such as musical sounds) to achieve healing. An example of this type of correspondence is; "Jiao" (equivalent to E note in Western Music Scale) corresponds with the wood element, the spring season, and the Liver. 86

Sanskrit and Tibetan mantras are ancient sound technologies that have been used for thousands of years to achieve enlightenment, altered states of consciousness, healing, invocation, and even what some may consider to be "magic". Dr. David Frawley relates the healing nature of Mantras as this; " The subtle body of Sanskrit sound vibration relates to the mental body and to the subtle or astral body in general, the site of the seven chakras. It creates and sustains the physical body, supporting health and well-being within it." Mantras are the realized sound of light discovered by the rishis in a state of thoughtless reality. 97 Sanskrit was developed as a translation of the sounds of creation and of light. It is a technology used to unlock deeper states of consciousness by properly pronouncing the words to resonate them within the mouth and skull. The ancient technologies of Tibetan chanting, overtone singing and throat singing have similar effects on human consciousness. Some have even claimed to witness Tibetan Monks performing Acoustic Levitation, defying the laws of gravity with acoustic resonance. 108

Auspiciously, the frequency of 111hz has been recorded resonating at an overwhelming number of sacred sites in many different places around the globe. Findings of MRI scans have suggested that when the brain is exposed to 111hz, the brain switches off the pre-frontal cortex, which de-activates the language center and the temporary switches from left to right sided dominance that is responsible for intuition, creativity, holistic processing, and inducing a meditative/trance-like state. 119

In conclusion, we are living in a time period in which our technological advancements are very expansive, but there is still much to be learned from taking a closer look at the advanced technologies of the ancients. The technologies used by many ancient cultures around the world were obviously very precise in many areas. The knowledge of the healing properties of sound and light frequencies was very deep and regarded with the utmost sanctity in practice, ritual, and ceremony. I am very grateful to be alive in this current time as the collective human consciousness begins its return to acceptance of these foundational medicinal practices that had nearly been lost. Until recently, sound healing modalities (and most other modalities considered to be "alternative"), have lost their place in our society. This is changing at a substantial rate, and I believe that all of us who are dedicating our gifts and intentions to "tipping the scale" could learn a great deal by remaining aware of, and open to learning from the profound knowledge and level of practice achieved by our ancient ancestors.

## Citations

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