

## The Song of a Vision

Singing and music making is vitally important for both the individual and the community. It creates and nourishes community. It supports the individual in emotional and spiritual wellbeing, creativity, expression, confidence, etc. It gives energy and brings joy.

And, it is basically free of charge!

A question popped up the other day, while re-writing the introduction to my new book "The Heart of Your Voice". Have the last century's singing and music teachers failed?

To answer that question, we of course need to define - if possible - what the aim of singing and music education is.

If the aim is for singing and music making to be a natural part of our daily life as both individuals and in groups, the answer is obvious: Failed!

If the aim is - for the majority of the students - to become professional musicians who can make a living out of it, the answer is again obvious: Failed!

If the aim is somewhere in between the two, the answer would have to be: Succeeded!

Well, rather than judge the music teachers, I would like to share a new vision that has slowly emerged, based on my last 5 years work as an alternative voice, singing and music teacher and therapist.

The mission statement of the Sounds Easy Project that was founded 5 years ago is: "The aim of the Sounds Easy Project is to bring joy, confidence and health into our lives and society through the use of singing and music"

Even though this has been my clear vision of Sounds Easy, I could not see how to accomplish it for the wider community. However, the vision kept being the same and I kept asking myself and others - How can we make this easily accessible to the everyday person.

In this journey, the learning has been immense for me. One of the main insight I have had over the last year is, that the work of Sounds Easy is more and more geared for the wider community and meeting its needs. My aim is not to produce professional singers. My aim is to "produce" happy and healthy singers.

To achieve this, singing and music education for both children and adults have to be made available. Many people will say that it is already available through the present music schools, individual teachers, etc. To me, that is not true.

Knowing that most people want to sing and make music, but only very very few achieve it, there is something missing in the existing system.

Voice, singing and music education for the everyday human being is actually **not** available. What is missing is an approach that meets the needs of the individual person rather than the desire of our society. The present system teaches into the present pattern: "Few people perform - the rest are spectators".

With that approach we will never return to that magic place where singing and

music making is a part of our everyday life.

Can you imagine the power it would have, if the government - and the business world - would start each meeting with a couple of songs or chants - not because they had too, but because they wanted to.

In the last year's activity of writing my book, the issue of making the work available to everyone has been a main focus. The book will be one of the first tools on the market to offer singing tuition that's accessible to the everyday person.

But that is not enough. There need to be places where people can go and learn to sing and play music in an environment that encourages the everyday person regardless of their musical background.

And this is where my new vision comes in, a vision that emerged around the kitchen table with the supporting energy of my friend and mentor, Patrick Sherratt.

I want to open music centres around the country where people can come and learn to make music, whether they want to read music or not, sing or play an instrument, gain confidence in group singing or as a performer, whether they want to come for a sound healing, sound therapy or want to learn how to heal themselves through sound.

In other words, a Holistic Music Space.

I see the teachers at these centres as a combination of therapists and music teachers, drawing the expertise from both fields and merge them into a very powerful learning environment.

I envisage it will take the next couple of years to create the underlying structure for this and to create a training program for the people who are to be involved.

If you have any suggestions, ideas, questions, comments, thoughts, interests, etc. - please drop me a note, email, fax or pick up the phone and let me hear your voice ☺

Allow me to finish this article by giving a big thank you to Patrick Sherratt for continuously listening to my madness, worries, excitements and general life issues. For your fantastic support and trust in what I do, your nurturing energy and your great hugs. Thanx for being you and for being here in Hawkes Bay ☺

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