

Sing for your life!

Healing the world one song at a time

Our vocal system enables us to talk, cry, yell, or sing. Ear, Nose and Throat doctors prove that natural breathing and singing positively affects our blood pressure and circulation. They lead to stronger heartbeats and better oxygenation of the blood. As the brain receives more oxygen, we focus better, we digest better, we heal better, and we handle emotional stress better. The doctors recommend singing for asthmatic patients... but most of us have breathing disorders, at least breathing weaknesses. How can we go back to proper breathing and our natural human voice, when there is hardly any melodic singing in families, kindergarten, schools or in public?

Eleven centuries ago, the psychologist and music theorist al-Farabi described the effects of music on the soul. More recently, science confirmed the positive effect of music not only on physical, but also on intellectual, emotional and social skills. We know that the right side of the brain is the seat of insight, imagination and creativity. It is also the seat of music. We know that the left side is the seat of language. It is also the seat of lyrics. Research confirms that both sides of the brain are involved in nearly every human activity. Songs – music and lyrics – trigger, develop, and connect both sides. We know that the world is in desperate need of insight, imagination and creativity. Shouldn't we give songs a try?

We think so, and we have established The Aarya Foundation. It advances singing science and advocates music education through singing from kindergarten on, for the sake of art, health and community.

We foster the study of singing through medicine, neuroscience, physics, and social sciences while taking into account that education and knowledge are culturally and socially located. We focus on:

- anatomy, physiology, and neurology of the singing voice
- acoustics of singing, both solo and in a group
- development of singing across the lifespan
- singing and well-being
- music perception and production

On one side, scientific understanding will identify the benefits of singing for the individual which, once they have been analysed by cultural economists, will define the benefits of singing for the community. On the other side, this understanding will be brought together with the generic principles of education – effective learning and effective teaching – to define the principles of learning and teaching singing effectively.

Sing Up

In England, we want to place singing at the heart of every school child's life, because singing can change lives and build stronger communities. Since October 2007, the Sing Up programme has striven towards its goal to get every school to become a singing school, through targeted resources, training and activities.

For schools, the programme promotes singing as a cross-curricular tool. For teachers, it provides training opportunities to lead inspirational singing activities with young people. For children, it gives the chance to sing and to develop their performance skills. And for communities, it runs successful projects placing singing at their heart. (see page 9)

The Singing Nations Network

The Aarya Foundation, the Sing Up programme and delegates from Canada, Denmark, England, Flanders, Ireland, Minnesota, The Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, South Australia and Wales have founded The Singing Nations Network with a straightforward vision: within the span of a generation, hundreds of millions of children will be receiving music education through singing and people will be singing together. Singing Nations –

- recognize that every person in the world has the right to sing;
 - affirm that singing contributes to human dignity and the free development of one's personality;
 - recognize that singing correlates with academic, social, emotional and physical achievement;
 - advance singing education that promotes understanding, tolerance and friendship among all communities, ethnic, cultural and religious groups;
 - support the right to freely participate in the musical life of the community;
 - support the right to protect the moral and material interests resulting from any singing production;
 - promote the right of the child to engage in play, and to join in a wide range of musical activities;
 - recognize that singing benefits society by enhancing public health, creativity, and productive capacity.
- Therefore, Singing Nations:
- ensure that singing education is a fundamental and sustainable component of a high quality education;
 - ensure that singing education activities and programmes are of a high quality in conception and delivery;
 - apply singing education principles and practices of singing to contribute to resolving social, cultural and productive challenges.

Let's give singing a try; let's bring singing back to our schools and to our lives!

Philippe Rixhon
Trustee of The Aarya Foundation



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