

SONIC STONES



SVARAMTM
SOUND EXPERIENCE



*All things are aggregations of atoms that dance
and by their movement produce sound.
When the rhythm of the dance changes,
the sound it produces also changes ...
Each atom perpetually sings its song,
and the sound at every moment creates
dense and subtle forms.*

Alexandra David-Neele

*The mineral world is a much more supple
and mobile world than could be imagined by
the science of the ancients.
Vaguely analogous to the metamorphoses
of living creatures, there occurs in the
most solid rocks, as we now know, perpetual
transformation of a mineral species.”*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

*When the stones start to ring
the human soul will sing,
Pure waters shall flow,
in healing streams, for light to grow.*

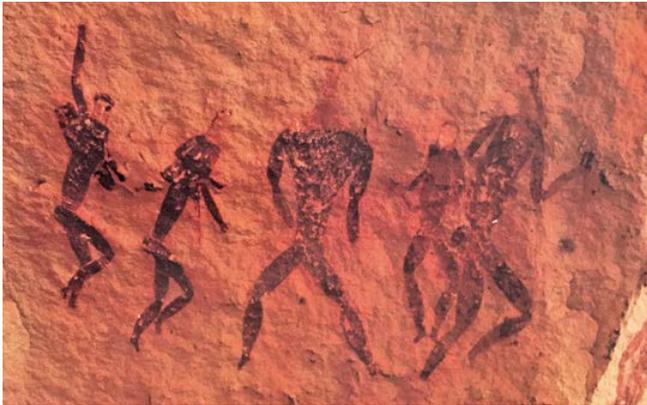
Ancient Chinese Legend

SVARAM SONIC STONES

These revolutionary new instruments, appearing and resounding in the acoustic experience of human civilization represent a rare and unheard of sonic phenomena. The powerful resonance and unique sonority of the Sound Stones immediately touch the surprised listener and evoke an atmosphere of another time and space. Its multi-sensory experience invites one into the heart of matter, listening to and expressing the vibrational, energetic nature of the manifest world.

HISTORY

Archaic Stone Art



The oldest stories of mankind are painted and written on stone, be it the prehistoric rock-art of indigenous people in Australia, Africa and the Americas or the numerous engravings on ancient tablets of Egypt and Mesopotamia. In some cultures stones were used in musical ceremonies, in some archaic tribes in Mali and Togo, in megalithic Vietnam and Sumatra, in the ancient Confucian court music of China and Korea, in

early Amharic liturgy of Ethiopia and in the Celtic lore of the British Isles. One of the earliest texts on music, carved in stone, has been discovered in Tamil Nadu, South India. It is here, that we can still find in some temples pillars which give off musical tones when struck in worship and celebration of the wonders of creation. Legends speak of “singing stones” as a symbol of the power of transformation. Through knocking on and playing stones, the petrified form and rigidity of apparently dead matter can release its inherent flow of life energy, opening hardened hearts and revealing the indwelling soul.

Ringin Rocks and Phonoliths



These geological occurrences are widely distributed and can be found worldwide in specific locations which have often been associated with ancient sacred sites, often in the context of petroglyphic rock engravings and paintings. It was discovered in acoustic archeology researches that paelolithic rock paintings in fact often mark places of ‘mysterious’ acoustic phenomena, echoes, resonances. Phonoliths are rarer porphyric stone formations with a distinct metallic sound. Stalactites and stalagmites found

in caves are also used to produce musical tones as in the Great Stalagpipe Organ of the Luray Caverns, Virginia. A very interesting site rediscovered only recently in South India with numerous petroglyphs and ringing rocks is located in Kupgal, Karnataka.

Oldest musical instruments

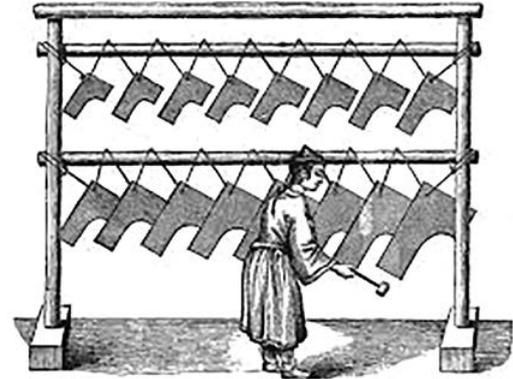


Lithophones and **Stone Gongs** are among the oldest musical instruments of the human heritage and are found in various forms more often in Africa, South America and South East Asia, with till now intact and revived cultures in Vietnam (Dan Da) and Ethiopia. The archeological find of Sankarjang in Orissa, India, pictures 3–4000 year old rectangular shaped and tuned plates that are considered the oldest instruments of India.

We are thrilled that these are actually very similar to the ones we are now handcrafting and tuning in the same porphyric granite in SVARAM workshop. A unique sonic stone feature of South Indian historic temples are the “Musical Stone Pillars” as specifically created, rare sculptural elements with distinct and tuned sounds, sometimes even of a musical scale arrangement. SVARAM has been involved in a project

to recover this lost and ancient craft secret and in collaboration with local artisan stonecutters and sculptors were able to successfully reconstruct first samples.

Stone chimes



The great importance of sonorous substances, such as wood and stones, among the percussion instruments of the Far East, stems from the religious belief that nature itself speaks to the human ear through this vibrating matter. Stone has been used for music making since prehistoric times and in fact is one of the eight materials traditionally used in China to classify indigenous instruments. Stones are either sounded in their natural setting or removed, tuned, and reshaped into sets of rectangular bars, discs, or L-shaped chimes.

Sophisticated forms of stone chimes made of diverse materials, including marble, nephrite, and jade have been assembled in prehistoric China in sets of 16 stones (bianqing) and were used in Confucian ritual orchestras. Some survive today in such groups in Korea (p'y n'gy ng) and have now been scientifically

tested and tuned to a surprising tonal accuracy and reconstructed. Their characteristic L-shape with vertex angle around 115° appears to produce stones with maximum sonority. Unlike most Chinese stone chimes, the pyeongyeong stones in a set have nearly the same shape but are scaled in thickness.

Stone Marimbas



Lithophones and Musical Stones became popular in the 19th century in the Lake District of England through a few crafted sets of found phonoliths in the Cumbria region. In SVARAM we experimented on the typical Basque instrument Txalaparta (or Chalaparta) with a visiting young player, while it is traditionally made of wood, we also added metal and stone bars for a mixture of sound textures.

Through sophisticated workmanship SVARAM can now produce finely tuned Lithophone sets of mostly pentatonic scales, but projects of full chromatic tunings have also been commissioned. For single larger stone plates we have also explored resonator boxes and tubes to enhance the sound.

SONIC STONE

Origins, SVARAM Explorations

While Aurelio, inspired by an old Chinese legend, was experimenting over a few years with lithophones, shaped, cut and tuned from local granite, the new discovery of the Sound Stones came through collaborative project work with Prof Klaus Fessmann, Mozarteum, University Salzburg and his son Hannes Fessmann, artist, creative designer and activist, in the context of a UNESCO Global Youth conference and consequent training work, programs and performances.



The German sculptor Elmar Daucher, inspired by the proportional, harmonic canon, had made in the 1970/80s sounding stone sculptures, as had also the Sardinian sculptor Pinnuchio Sciola. Whereas these first sound stones were played percussively the actual chance discovery – after rainfall on the outdoor sculptures – of the gentle polishing, stroking playing with the help of water, is legend. Similar to the playing of a crystal-glass with wetted fingertips, the sound is akin in its continuity and resonances to a bowed string. Imagine that, in comparison to the crystal-glass, the vibrating mass of the stone now equals its 20–90 kilos!

Musical Stone Craft

The first explorations of the new sound stones in Europe were made with granite, marble, basalt and serpentine. Good luck had it that selected material from an old local surface quarry here in Tamil Nadu proved to be ideal as it was drier and more resonant than the European equivalents. Stone Craft is one of the oldest artisan guilds in India with its origin in the ancient craft, art and science of Shilpi, the temple builder's highly skilled tradition, still alive in South India.



Experience

These revolutionary new instruments, resounding in the acoustic experience of human civilization, are now manufactured by SVARAM utilizing locally found, selected granite. Each stone represents a unique sound-sculpture and is played in a tangible unfolding process, exploring the sound textures with the help of the plasmic fluidity of water. The resulting sound is a new and unique experience for human ears and is of a multisensory and possibly synaesthetic perception.

The unusual resonance and unique sound of the stones invites the listener into the heart of matter, expressing the vibrational/quantum dimension behind the manifest world.

Sound Healing Applications

The Singing Stone is also used as a Sound Healing Instrument in specialized therapies and clinical applications, as seen also in Prof Fessmann's research work and trainings. The sound of the stone is a completely new and unique auditory and haptical experience of synaesthetic perception. It has very positive, stimulating and calming effects on the regeneration and balance of our body-mind structure.

Each stone has and creates a unique resonance field. The sounds emerging from the stone meet and suffuse different parts and planes of the being, bringing them into relation and synchronizing the being with the vibratory, energetic nature of universal existence. The stone becomes a transmitter of the power of primal and pure vibration and re-minds and inspires our system with the harmony and peace of deeply restful being.





SONORIUM SOUND STONE (MULAM)

This ancient phenomenon represents the grounding earth element of the Sound Healing Space. Played in gentle motions with the help of water its vibrational expression from the core of matter touches a yet unknown sense of depth and the very mystery of sound creation.

Its resonating effect on the body is calming and stimulating at the same time, supporting the inner balance of a healthy, right tonus between tension and relaxation.

SONIC STONE
STANDARD
MODELS



Mulam, 51 x 27 x 21 cm



Resonator Box, Water Bowl



Chitra, 41 x 21 x 21



Uttara, 51 x 27 x 34 cm



Brahmanda, 50 x 36 x 36 cm

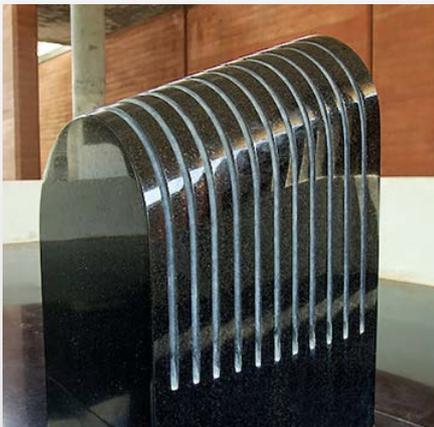


Akilan, 45 x 30 x 30 cm



Natural

SONIC STONE
CUSTOMIZED
MODELS



Uttara Variation

Mulam



The heavy Mulam stone represents the grounding earth element of the SONORIUM Sound Healing Space. Its resonating effect on the body is calming and stimulating at the same time, supporting the inner balance of a healthy poylvagal tonus between tension and relaxation. This is our musically deepest model, touching those bass frequencies which naturally have a stronger, more apparent effect on the body and its cells. To enhance this further we are using it on a specially constructed resonator box which also functions as a convenient stand, bringing out its sculptural element.

The solidity of this bass stone also comes through metaphorically, offering a complete grounding in the density, clarity and support of our mineral structure and material substance.

Chitra



This is our younger, smaller and more accessible model of the standard sound stones. It has only 7 lamellas (whereas the Uttara has a complete 12 and Mulam 9–11). It is kind of a female counterpart to the more male Mulam and naturally reaches higher frequencies more; it and can also be played by smaller and finer hands.

As with all the other stones the real potential of the sound and its unfolding depends very much on the opening of the mineral 'pores' so to say, on the responsiveness of the material, which can only be harnessed through extensive playing with a listening and sensory dedication. It seems almost like a miracle how the stones then come alive, opening their full spectrum and the astounding richness of the mineral sound vibrations.

Uttara

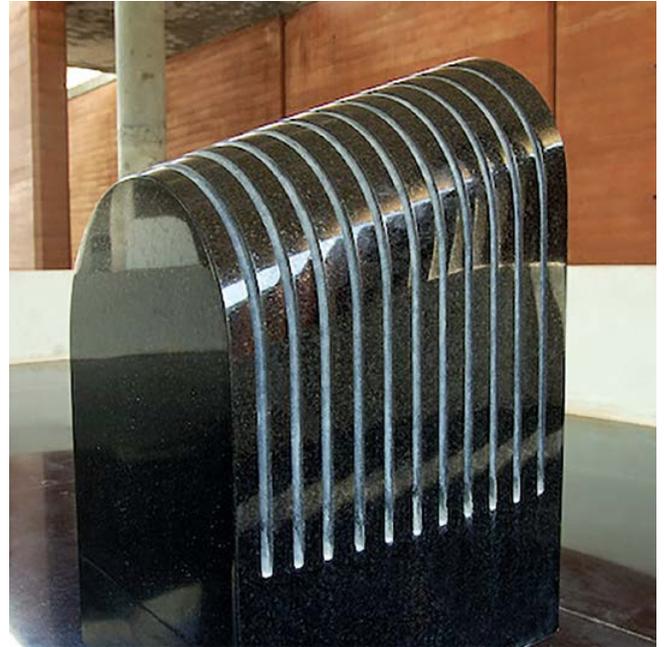


The Uttara holds the potential of the magnum opus of the sound stones. Its 12 ribs and the specifically calculated angle somehow come close to a scalar arrangement from the deepest to the highest tone.

Even while we are not looking into musical, tonal tuning, as this is technically anyway not possible, it is still rewarding to have the option of sliding up and down the full range of single tones. But the true magic of the sound stones unfolds in the dense complexity of the combination of frequencies and timbres, in the layers of harmonic rich micro-tonality and completely surprising sound clusters emerging from the solid mass.

The adventure of uncovering these hidden sound treasures is just at its very beginning.

Uttara – Variation



As can be seen here the Uttara also comes in a variation of a strongly rounded top. We came to this form as it follows the actual experience of playing with the sound stones with water wetted hands and it surely allows a more fluid play and intricate combination of sounds.

The whole experience of moving the hands gently over the surface of the polished granite is an intricate process of meeting the rigid structure of this densest material with the flowing movement of life energy and thereby opening, invoking, teasing out of the mineral its inherent yet hidden capacity of vibration. It is as if the stone comes alive through our touch, through our longing for being touched ourselves and inspired by the creative force of the mysterious divine player.

Brahmanda



From the first experiments of shaping and sculpturing the sound stones the idea of an egg fascinated us not only because of its aesthetic value but even more so as we wanted to explore the vibrations of diverse forms, shapes and sizes, knowing the egg as one of the most perfected forms of nature. In Indian mythology the Brahmanda stands at the origin of creation and contains all its potential, and, yes, hides in its mineral shell the secret of life.

This sound sculpture is not only very appealing at first sight but also can reveal its vibrations in a very surprising and unfolding way that will take commensurate patience of pondering over, breeding new life and finally exposing the vibrations contained in matter.

Akilan



This archetypal form stands symbolic of the connection of heaven and earth, the above and below, connecting and supporting the worlds like a solid pillar. The playing of the sound stones itself offers this primal experience of coming into touch with the hidden secret of matter: that within its solidity of mass and a clearly defined, rigid structure there are movements of waving, sounding life energies.

As a consequence both the qualities, of stillness and movement, of peace and power are accessible and can be explored through concentrated and consecrated play – offering the core of our activities for the discovery of the seeming paradox of our life: the evolution of our understanding and our growing experience of heaven within earth.

Natural Stone



The Natural Stones are one of a kind sculptures and are actually 'findings', rare found objects. This involves a good amount of persistence and luck, a coming together of many factors and therefore represents a truly unique instrument.

Depending on the commission, we set out on the search in an off the track local quarry. Artisan Karthik is surely under an adventurous spell of surprises during the process of discovery and finally crafting the sound sculpture. This offers a chance for nature to work in its own way and opens the beauty of working with the unknown, as even the emergence of the sound depends on so many fortuitous factors.

We have been working with natural stone sculptures for private residences, corporate offices and public spaces.

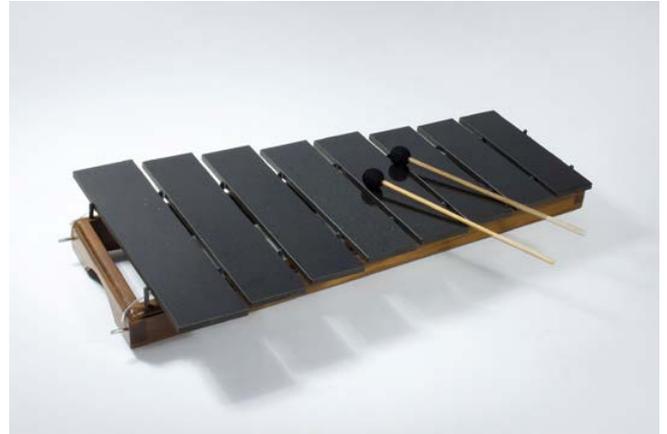


Mumbai Airport, Terminal 2

STONE INSTRUMENTS

The interest in natural materials is an expression of the need for reconnecting with nature, for coming into a deeper relationship with the elements. Sonic Stone Instruments, while following the oldest linages of instrumental sound making of humanity, are a contemporary expression and new phenomena that will certainly continue to surprise and enamour for generations. While the Sonic Stone is the most extraordinary and shining exponent of the series, each type of the diverse stone instruments has its own appeal, character and peculiarities. We offer standardized models of different size, weight and design and also take commissioned orders for in-and outdoors sculptural works.

Indoor Lithophone (Sankarjang)



After a long sound journey and years of experimentation SVARAM feels fortunate to be able to present the various models and new standardized design and sizes of the Lithophones. The specially selected and crafted black granite is tuned in a labour intensive process into diverse scales and sets, utilizing ongoing research into the effects of sound on the psychophysical nature of our being. The simple play with carefully crafted mallets – following the path of deep and dedicated listening – creates a rare quality of effective sound and a rich spectrum of overtones. Deep resonance can be experienced and the being opens to its original and nourishing sound source.

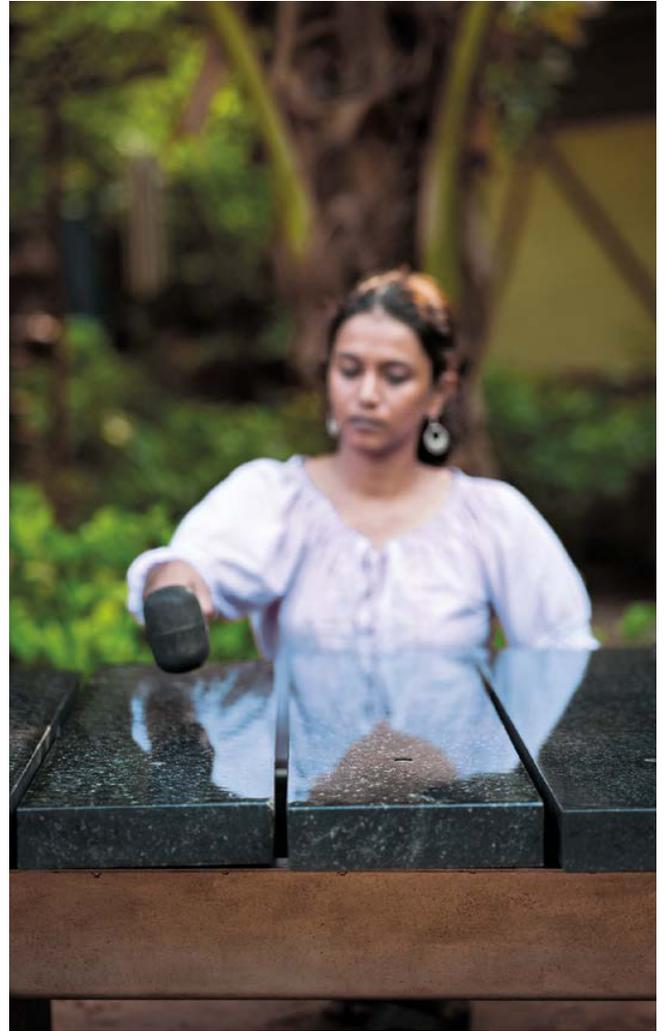
Stone Plate – Gongs



These are new experiments by Anandavel a young artisan who also works with Plate Bells and felt inspired and had the urge to transfer the geometric shape and proportion of the metal bells and new works on first trials and in-house prototype instruments.



Outdoor Lithophone



These 5 large longitudinal, rectangular stones are like steps into the mineral world and surprisingly also emit tuned musical sounds that can be played by everyone. The sound of the stones invokes a deeper reflection on the capacity even densest matter has to resound and resonate.

Humming Stone



Hidden in the greenery of the garden this granite stone sculpture brings all the cells of the body into an alerted perception of vibration. The experienced hum will have a different tone frequency for the listeners around the stone than for the individual producing the hum.

Works and Collaborations



Here some impressions of notable projects, commissioned works, types and models of our Sonic Stone Instruments. Many of the inquiries about these unique, primal instruments bring special contacts and interesting encounters and relationships as the adventure is on this verge of the new and unknown, in progress. It somehow brings this sense of a mystery, a curiosity and wonderful impetus of fresh discovery, to assist nature, even through seemingly silent stones, to reveal its wonders and gifts of deeply inherent order and harmony.

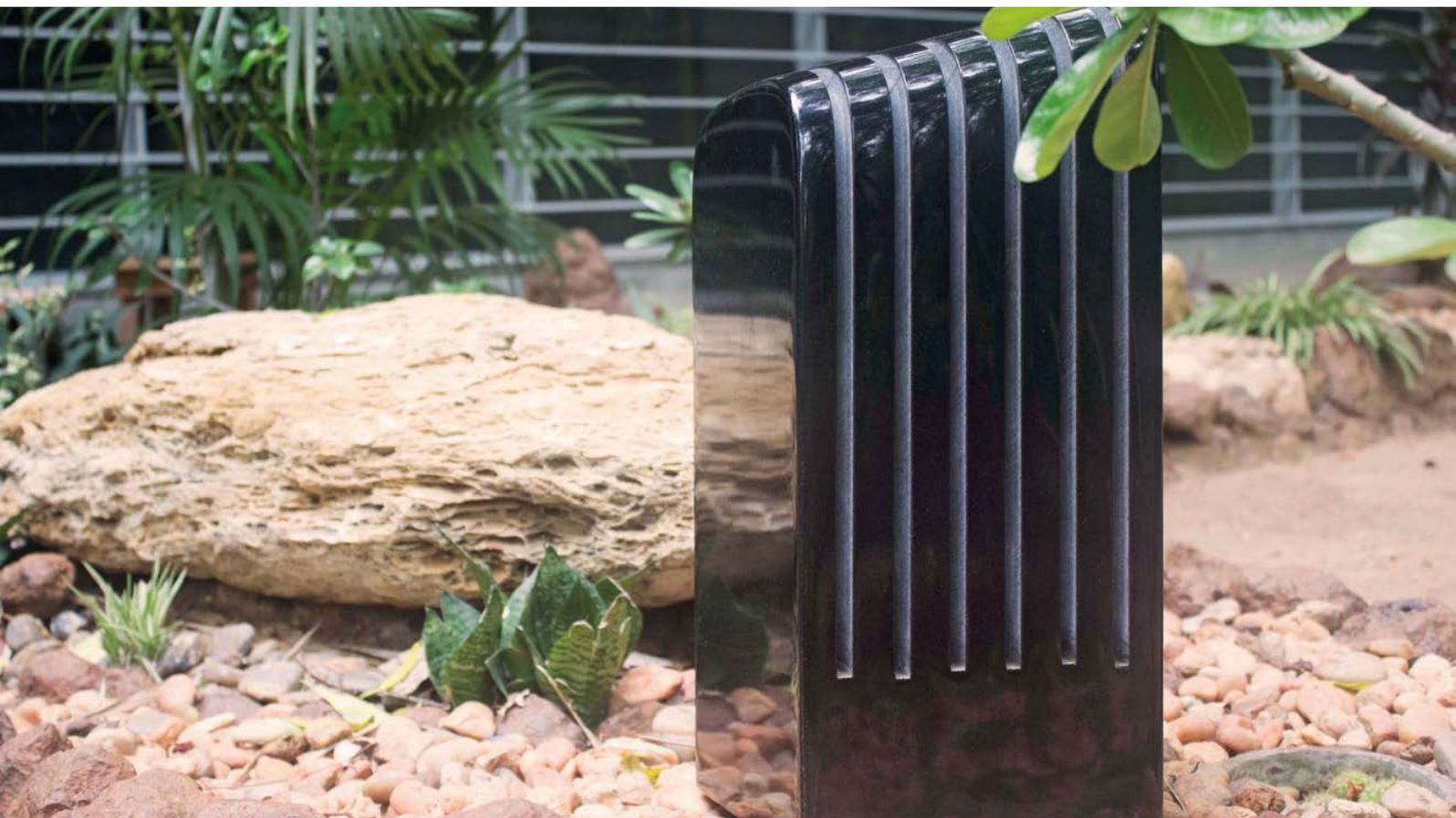
One of the most precious collaborations to date is with the Japanese Musician and living legend Stomu Yamash'ta who gave up his illustrious career of one of the then foremost percussionists in the international concert scene of the 1970/80ies to pursue his inner call and one-pointed passion for the Secret of the Sanukit, the ancient Japanese volcanic stone of ritualistic and meditation use in temples and shrines.

PROJECTION

The experience of recent years, working with the sonic properties of millions of year old and formed stone material unfolds in its own slow course but at the same time promises to stay on the cutting edge of human auditory, musical and refining perception. There are already attempts of digital virtual sample versions for stone sound but the call for and experience of the pure and powerful, full body encounter with the phenomena of strongly vibrating solid matter continues to intrigue us with its authenticity and magic. Participate and become part of its further evolution!

As we are still in the first stages of this futuristic and yet deeply ancient sound adventure, we are able to communicate further details about background, process, ethics and purchase only on an individual basis. For more information contact us directly.

Another rewarding commission came from the Dutch musician, harmonic singer and composer Danny Becker. He requested two large lithophone plates to be specifically tuned just a few Hertz apart, which created a pulsing effect, similar to the New Waves tunings. This proved to be our entry portal into the study and execution of Binaural Beat Frequencies and their correspondence to brain waves.



KARTHIKEYAN SAMINATHAN

From the beginning, Karthikeyan has demonstrated a passionate and deep relationship with the magic of the sound stones. He found the dual nature of the stones – the toughness of the material and the softness of the shapes it could assume: the particle and the wave, very exciting and intriguing.

His connection with stones began in early 2000. He was in his early twenties and welcomed the work of the heavy crafting of lithophones. Guided by Aurelio, Karthikeyan quickly learnt the science and art of bringing stones to life. The first piece he created was a 8-bar Lithophone in 2003.



“When I saw the first material from the quarry being cut on the big round saw, I felt the stones call out to me ... they sang ... made an eerie sound as if seeking freedom from their material confines”; says Karthikeyan.

In 2004, Hannes Fessmann visited Svaram and introduced Karthikeyan to the world of Sound Stones. Along with Hannes and other visiting artists, Karthikeyan experimented for several years and explored various designs, trials, inventions, shapes and sizes, acquiring great craftsmanship in the field of sound stones and creating more than 200 musical stone pieces. The pieces have found places of joy and honour in both private collections and in public spaces in corporations, airports, parks, hotels and educational institutions. In parallel, he also cultivated a solid team of craftsmen who enjoy the challenges and joy of new creations.

Making high quality precision instruments of the “Fessmann Klangsteine” standard, requires total dedication and concentration. Karthikeyan feels that his reward for working to such high standards is the positive feedback and respect from clients around the world. In fact, the Prof. Fessmann has really appreciated his work; having accepted nearly 150 sound stones built under his craftsmanship!

Even as Svaram has grown its expertise in Sonic Stones, Karthikeyan senses that a wonderful ‘creative-cutting edge’ and exciting field of sonic expressions will further emerge through this new and yet so ancient phenomena of matter’s music.



SVARAM SOUND HEALING

SVARAM Sound Healing modalities offer a new approach to Wellness and Wellbeing. The original role of music and sound as a source of inspiration and healing is harnessed again to create an uplifting, aesthetic and harmonizing experience. Sound has been used in many cultures from ancient times and in many therapeutic contexts to heal, strengthen, rejuvenate and restore us physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. When we are out of balance we feel a disharmony which may manifest in confused thinking or stress, physical symptoms, fatigue and emotional vulnerability.

A Sound Healing Session creates an atmosphere and dedicated space of listening, tuning, aligning and coming into resonance with the universal principles and effects of material and subtle vibrations. Tuned sound brings the receptive person into deeper, dreamlike, relaxing alpha states, which stimulate the inherent self healing powers, aligns the body and its more subtle layers, brings the system into deeper coherence and offers the opportunity to harmonize, refresh and re-balance the organism. The naturally tuned instruments reflect the harmony of the spheres and the organic fluidity of waves – life in its original expression. The synaesthetic sensory experience invites us into a heightened awareness and deep relaxation throughout all the cells, uncovering layers of self and soul.

Benefits include calming the mind and stopping internal dialogue; rebalancing the physical, emotional and spiritual bodies and awakening higher states of consciousness that are conducive to healing and transformation. A Sound Bath experience will alleviate stress, let your muscles and entire being relax, renew and rejuvenate and leave you feeling content, clear, minded, energetic and optimistic. Existing research confirms that Sound Healing synchronizes brain waves to achieve profound states of relaxation, helping to restore the normal vibratory frequencies of the cells in our bodies.

SVARAM Sound Healing offers

- a new wellness modality
- a full body listening experience
- a magic space of auditory and sonic surprises
- deep relaxation and de-stress
- opening and dissolving of limiting blockades
- regeneration and wellbeing
- reinvigoration and energetization
- an enhanced awareness space of listening and musical vibrations
- a letting go into the flow of soundwaves
- a harmonization of the mind and emotional system
- a balancing and recreation for the body
- a touch of inner soul spaces
- a heightening of spirit
- a lifting up into inspirational space



*“SVARAM brings the joy of music
and the magical touch of sound
into everyone’s heart and hands.”*



SVARAM™

SVARAM – Musical Instruments & Research
Auroville 605 111 TN India / Tel. +91 413 2622220
www.svaram.org / svaram@auroville.org.in



Click here to see the video on
YouTube or scan the QR Code.