

Expanding VAHT in Europe

by Marianne Gubri

During a journey to Hong Kong for the World Harp Congress in 2017, I had the chance to meet in person a wonderful harp therapist colleague, Carmen Lee (CHTP and VAHT trainer), who offered me a VAHT session in her Harmony studio. As a harpist and therapeutic musician, I was trained to feel the vibration of the soundbox of my instruments along my body and my arms. During singing training and Nada Yoga training I had plenty of experience with the feeling of the sound inside my chest, my throat, and my head. This time, it was different: the vibration was inside my body, in places where I never felt vibration in the past. I will remember forever the sensation of feeling my organs, especially my heart vibrating through the water mat and resonating to the frequencies that the VAHT practitioner was offering me.

Since then, I decided I wanted to learn about vibroacoustics with the harp. While I was speaking with Silvia Maserati, Italian music therapist, CMCP and VAHT graduate, I understood that it was possible to start the program online, which better suited my activities in Europe. Studying the VAHT Training Course® home study portion has been a wonderful travel into archetypes, sound properties, vibrational medicine and VAHT devices. There is still a lot of knowledge that I would like to elaborate on in the future, especially the connection between sound and the energetic system. We then split the Practicum portion of the program into two days in two cities: on the 12th of July 2022, Silvia Maserati offered me the use of her devices, a bed with two transducers and her two harps, a Telenn Kadiou Camac 34-string and a Llanera Camac Harp in a studio in Milan, Italy.

The training was supervised online by Sarajane Williams, who first advised me on how to start a session: we needed to keep track of every patient with a treatment record, asking for his/her tension pain levels and mood levels and mapping the resonant frequencies of his/her body with a simple but practical and complete method. Then we were able to concentrate on improvising or playing with specific notes and rhythms or techniques to match the preferred frequencies shown by the client. I received a VAHT session while Silvia was playing and then offered a session to Silvia and to another volunteer.

I discovered that every tiny movement on the harp or on the wood (especially on the soundbox) is amplified by the mic and the amplifier itself and produces a sort of shock to the client's ears and body. This gave me the awareness to pay more attention to my movements and to the way I would play the harp: sweetness, love, delicacy became the words I kept in mind while playing. The touch on our strings is the touch the client feels on his ears and on his body, like a real sound massage. I had this awareness in my previous harp therapy studies and practices, but in this case, the effect was more intense.

As a VAHT receiver, I felt that a high volume from the device (amp and pre-amp) can be disturbing for our ears and our body; low volume can sometimes make the vibration disappear from the table and the body doesn't feel anymore the movement while we can feel the sound and the vibration outside of the body. I found this especially clear with higher frequencies (above A 440Hz) that were moving around my head. The sound was hitting my ears only from the acoustic sound of the harp. I will come back later to these specific sensations, as some of my volunteers felt them too.

In the meanwhile, it was time to create my own VAHT devices: thanks to the Training Course information and to Silvia's experienced advice, I was able to ask my sound engineer Roberto Passuti to build a central unit (with KK Sound pick up and a t.amp E-400 stereo amplifier). He helped me to build a portable wooden massage bed and a chair with two pillows adding 4 Dayton Audio TT25-16 PUCK tactile transducers.

On July 18, 2022, I started my second day of practicum in the Arpeggi school studio in Bologna, with a celtic Ana Salvi 38-string harp and an Aurora Salvi pedal harp. The training was supervised online by Sarajane Williams. With the four volunteers, two adult women and two adult men, I was able to observe a lot of different experiences that I will summarize now. Some of this information might become the axis of new research in future.

The first most interesting point is probably that for all four participants, their tension and pain levels decreased in nearly all parts of the body. On a scale from 1 (very relaxed) to 9 (very painful), they all reported a decrease of pain sensation: in some areas of the body pain level was from 3-4 before the session, and 1-2 after the session.

The frequencies are not perceived in the same ways by a different person: some feel more the lower frequencies (mainly from C 32.703 Hz to C 65.406 Hz) while other people feel also the higher frequencies (above A 440Hz). The preferred frequencies are mainly the middle low frequencies (from C 32.703



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Hz to C 65.406 Hz). The pedal harp offers more profound and lower sounds that seemed to vibrate and please the volunteers more than the celtic harp.

I am not sure if these preferences are linked to personal conditions and personal resonances or to the specific volume of the devices we adjusted according to the volunteer's taste. I also wondered if men had lower resonance frequencies than women but the cases I observed showed me that it is not always true. Moreover, theoretically lower frequencies are felt in the lower part of the body (legs, lower back...) and higher frequencies are felt the highest part of the body (head, neck, shoulders...). Actually, there are some people who experienced very different resonant points in their body corresponding to a non-regular frequency progression. This experience inspired me to pay more attention to concrete results than looking to apply a theory on our bodies. It is especially important that our next experiences might be followed by the scientific, openminded and objective method that Sarajane and her colleagues shared with their work.

I observed that people with specific pain (one volunteer in one arm and the other in one knee) did not feel the vibration in the wounded area. They felt the frequency in the opposite part of the body; it is an interesting point to deepen specific disturbance not known from the patient himself and could be an interesting way to do diagnosis for VAHT trained doctors, nurses, or vibrational therapists. It may explain energetic blocks too.

Other volunteers may experience an increase of pain during the session. N. arrived with abdominal pain: after a moment in which the assessment of the frequencies seemed to amplify the pain, she expressed a deep release and lowered stress. This release at first amplified her stomach pain and then she cried and let go tears of joy and pleasure and sensed the aim and direction she wanted to take in her life. For J., the pain manifested first with a light headache and daze just after the session. She finally took a time to assess herself. The day after, she told me that it has been a long time since she slept for so long and so profoundly.

The first stage of assessment in VAHT technique (especially pain or stress release) may surprise or even scare a trainee without much experience, and I was glad to have Sarajane supervising me. I understand the importance of having a referred professional doctor or psychologist to call in case of emergency.

Another interesting case is the one of F., who at first felt that some frequencies were resonating "outside of his body" above his knees, below his hips and around his head. During the improvisation, he said that he felt his body floating without any gravity sensation. This description is very near to my own experience: with my actual knowledge, it could be the manifestation of one of our subtle bodies experiencing vibration. It is a very delicate and subtle sensation that gives warmth and vitality, and relaxes at the same time. In my modest opinion, VAHT technique may open many doors for new therapies and diagnoses as it gives a clear and precise sensation of the subtle body to the patient himself, a very rare occasion in the field of vibrational techniques.

Lastly, a volunteer, M., experienced the vision of water waves over the sand and psychedelic colour waves during his session. These are similar to the pictures of cyclic sounds, mandalas, yantra and rose windows of medieval cathedrals.

A few days later, on July, 28, 2022, Silvia Maserati came on a retreat near Piacenza to present VAHT to a Level 2 group of students of the International Harp Therapy Program.

After a very complete presentation of VAHT origins, methods, mechanisms of action and possible applications, she kindly offered to all of the 14 participants a chance to try VAHT both as a receiver and a performer. Seeing the faces and the physical movements and expressions of the students was clear evidence of their feeling of pleasure, tranquillity, relaxation and surprise.

As we were working on resonance during the module with Christina Tourin, they had a direct experience of the effects of sound on the physical body, and how the



Marianne Gubri provides VAHT

vibrations can then lead to emotions or thoughts. It was an important discovery and unique sensation for most of them. We will definitely repeat this kind of presentation and experience with the next IHTP training in France and Italy.

As for my future as a VAHT trainer, I would like to invite new clients in my studio in Bologna to experience this pure sound massage; I would also love to bring VAHT during a holistic retreat that I conduct in several centres in Italy. My aim is also to include VAHT presentations and experiences during IHTP or other therapeutic program sessions.

A special thank you to all the people I met during this training: Sarajane Williams, Silvia Maserati, Carmen Lee and Roberto Passuti who directed me to the place I wanted to be: a place made of care and service, love and beauty, sound and harp. ♡

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