

SurpRIse: Cleanse your being with a gong bath

07/26/2010 10:18 AM EDT

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Leading a meditative gong bath are, from left, Stephanie Marisca, Joy Quinn Blum and Deb Stevens, who are known as sound-healing artists. The next Resonant Voices of the Spheres gong bath is Aug. 20 at 7:30 p.m. in All That Matters, 315 South Main St., South Kingstown. To register, \$20, call (401) 782-2126 or visit allthatmatters.com

The Providence Journal Glenn Osmundson

You've probably taken a bath before. But did it cleanse your inner being?

Maybe you need a gong bath.

"The idea is that you are washed over with sound," says Stephanie Marisca, a gong bath practitioner. "And it washes over you at every level — spiritual, emotional, mental and physical."

Marisca is a sound-healing artist along with Joy Quinn Blum and Deb Stevens, who together are "The Resonant Voices of the Spheres." They use gongs and perform gong baths, a form of relaxation and meditation, at monthly events in South Kingstown.

"It's a way of getting the mind to be quiet and still," Marisca says. "The sound is the sonic drive that allows you to enter into the no-mind kind of place. The sound takes over and you leave your chattering mind. It creates stress relief."

The idea is to hear and think nothing but the banging and vibrating of the gong.

“The gong allows us to realign what we call our inner resonance, which has your highest good as its intention.”

You simply sit. You relax. And you let the gong do its thing.

“It’s an acoustic detox. You flush out all the dissonant vibrations within your physical and emotional being.”

The gong has been used for such purposes for thousands of years, according to Marisca. But it’s not the sole source of sound healing. Chirping birds and crashing waves, Marisca says, can have a similar effect.

“It’s just one component of a variety of sounds that are healing.”

A typical gong bath session lasts 60 to 90 minutes and attracts 20 to 40 people, Marisca says. And these people simply give in to the sound of the gong, which increases in intensity and frequency.

“The mind is not attaching itself to a story. The mind is not saying, ‘I’m going to listen to the lawnmower.’ It has nowhere else to be and there is no other sound but the gong.”

Each gong bath is unique, Marisca says, with each session a byproduct of the gong and the people present.

“They bring with them their own stories and their own vibrations. It’s always different, which is why people continue to come back.”