

Trauma and the Nervous System - This is where the music plays

3rd European Conference on Somatic Experiencing 2026, Prag



VaguSingers – Voice, Resonance and Connection – Jakob Ruster ***A body-oriented practice that combines voice, singing and elementary music with perspectives from Somatic Experiencing and Zapchen Somatics***

The voice is our first instrument: long before we speak, we communicate and co-regulate through sound, rhythm and movement. In the VaguSingers Playshop, we explore this primal musicality – playfully, embodied and in connection:

1. **Experiencing Voice & Music Playfully:** We use humming, yawning, singing, breath, and movement and from there rhythm, vocal games and body percussion, this as a “bottom-up” musicality that supports vitality, connection, and resonance.
2. **Nervous System States & Regulation:** We observe arousal and calmness, linking them to co-regulation, titration, and pendulation.
3. **Proto-Conversations & Early Musicality:** We explore voice as very early nonverbal and musical communication - ‘language before language’, supporting co-regulation between infant and caregiver in a musical way.
4. We recognize voice as nonverbal communication in general and in therapy sessions.
5. We experience voice as a potential playful doorway to connection and spirituality.

Through voice and singing, I help people - regardless of their musical background - to discover an embodied, joyful and pressure-free way to tap into their musical creativity. In doing so, we explore, among other things, early childhood musicality and the regulation of the nervous system. Central to this is an inclusive and accessible approach, creating space for play and the experience of resonance, connection and co-regulation.

Jakob Ruster, Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP)TM, community musician, Atem-Tonus-Ton Teacher, München
More Information: www.vagusingers.de/ Contact: info@singaz.de



For me, a steady rhythm is the very essence of containment; I find great joy in exploring this in a playful way within a group through movement and voice.

Tatjana van de Weyer, Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP)TM, alternative practitioner, physical therapist, musician, Fürth www.heilpraxis-vandeweyer.de



How can elements of music therapy - such as the sonic exploration of inner experience or joint improvisation using easy-to-play instruments and the voice - support the SE process on a nonverbal level? And what potential do they hold for regulation and integration within the nervous system? These questions lie at the heart of my work.

Christoph Steinmetz, Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP)TM, Certified Music Therapist, Gestalt Therapist, Berlin
www.christoph-steinmetz.de - post@christoph-steinmetz.de



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Voice, Connection and Creating Conditions for Encounter through Music and SE **Dorothe Ingenfeld**

My work with the voice has changed profoundly through SE. An understanding of nervous system regulation now informs the way I teach, and when vocal challenges seem resistant to technical solutions alone, I may invite a deeper exploration through SE. At the same time, I increasingly bring the voice into my therapeutic work, exploring its expressive possibilities as a pathway to awareness and connection. The meeting of voice work and SE has become an ongoing source of discovery in my practice.

This development has also influenced my artistic work. Since completing my SE training, my approach to concert programming has changed profoundly. I have become increasingly interested in creating musical formats that invite connection, both with oneself and with others. This has led me to develop an album dedicated to grief and consolation: the first CD offers classical songs and creates space for listeners to connect with their grief, while the second contains songs of comfort designed for singing along. My newest artistic experiment is a dating song recital—a musical format that playfully invites people into connection with one another.

Dorothe Ingenfeld, Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP)TM, alternative practitioner for psychotherapy, SEST, Rosenmethode Bodywork (Internship), classical singer, voice coach. Practice in Berlin, Germany, contact: dorotheingenfeld@posteo.de

www.somatic-experiencing.de/traumatherapeut/dingenfeld/profile
<https://classical.music.apple.com/fr/album/1779733221>



Why music can complement and enrich trauma treatment by SE – Ulrike Frey

1) *Through music, we offer a connection on equal terms in the here and now*

As music therapists, we are ready to enter into a natural connection at eye-level with our clients and invite them to experience authenticity and joy in the here and now through genuine and playful musical interaction with us.

2) *Music invites us to resonate emotionally and to become audible to each other*

Through free, structured or thematically guided improvisation on musical instruments, we become perceptible, audible and visible in music therapy. We come into contact with our own emotions, impulses and longings and open ourselves up to mutual inspiration and influence.

3) *In music therapy, we can offer co-regulation and nurturing*

As music therapists we have the opportunity and responsibility to act in a stabilising, affirming and supportive manner in our musical interaction, or at times to move more towards stimulation and challenge, in order to ensure an appropriate yet safe and reliable space for our clients within this vibrant musical process.

4) *Resonance develops best within a field of co-regulation.*

Our resonance is variable and depends on many factors: our surroundings and how they are attuned to us, our inner state, our experiences etc. There is no single effect of music that applies to all people and situations; rather, it is similar to all other sensory experiences: what some people find pleasant may cause others to run for the hills.

Ulrike Frey, Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP)TM, Music Therapist,
Berlin frey@processes.de www.processes.de

