

MMMM...  
Music, Movement, Mindfulness, Mountains

Finding true harmony  
in the French Pyrenees

Sunday 12 - Saturday 18 August 2018

with Ruth Bentley and Olivier Lelouch



This will be a unique five-day journey through the world of sound and silence, movement and mindfulness, at a beautiful mountain retreat, nestled on a Pyrenean hillside with stunning views across the valley towards distant mountains slumbering softly beneath endless summer skies.

Replete with fresh air, pure spring water and delicious organic, vegetarian food, this experience will leave you feeling 'mmm'...

During the week, we will be combining deep and personal inner-work with light-hearted and fun-filled play, to help us come back to our natural vibration – in harmony with ourselves, with others and with the nature that surrounds us.

Our work with sound will be both energized with opportunities for movement while also being soothed with meditative opportunities for stillness; this will allow us to delve deeper into sounds and signals coming from both within and without.

There will be a blend of individual, partner and group activities which will take place both inside the studio and outside in nature (weather permitting), with forays into the woods and mountains not far away.

These experiences will be interwoven with various mindfulness practices inspired by the well-known Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program.

Please note that absolutely no musical experience is necessary, although existing musical expertise (along with instruments!) will be very much welcomed. You will be gently guided and supported throughout the journey, which will undoubtedly be full of new discoveries for everyone !

## Retreat content

It is hoped that the week will unfold in the following way :

### **Sounds from within**

Starting with ourselves, guided by primordial toning, we will see what vocal sounds emerge, and observe their vibrational effects on different parts of the body. With various silent practices, we will also listen closely to the non-verbal sounds our bodies make, such as our beating heart and breathing lungs, allowing us to reconnect with our bodies' inner wisdom which can often get lost in the fast pace of noisy, modern life. Inspired by the timbres and rhythms we find there, we will explore ways in which to bring out this inner wisdom and allow it to express itself in musical dialogues with others.

We will use the voice, the body and a range of instruments to explore our relationships with sound-making and silence, turn-taking and listening, perhaps giving us deeper insight into how we relate to others and the outside world.



## Sounds from without

We will also be working intimately with sounds from nature, such as wind blowing in the trees, water flowing over the rocks and insects singing in the grass. We will explore how these sounds and our own responses to them, along with mindful movement, can play a role in helping us release any physical or emotional blockages. Furthermore we will connect with the earth's natural frequency, using tuning forks to guide us, and then explore other, related tones for a harmonizing, therapeutic effect.



## Bringing inner and outer together

Throughout the week, we will be engaging in a two-way communication, listening to and expressing the sounds coming from both the world within and the world without. Becoming progressively aware of, and confident in, how these sounds inform and inspire each other, we will hopefully settle into a deeper sense of harmony, coming back to our own true frequency and innate capacity to heal.

## What to expect

We envisage a week rich in the following:

- a rare chance to weave together a range of vibrations using voice, body and instruments, so creating a deep space for exploration and creativity, movement and meditation, relaxation and healing
- a joyful time of self-discovery and sharing
- an intense encounter with the present moment
- the chance to bathe and bask in the powerful mountain energy surrounding us

## Typical daily schedule

Each day will roughly take shape as follows, adapted where necessary to the needs of the moment and changes in the weather :

- 7:30am : Meditation, inside or outside
- 8:30am : Breakfast
- 10am : Practice (with sound, silence, movement or other), inside or outside
- 1pm : Lunch
- 3pm : Practice (with sound, silence, movement or other), inside or outside or further afield in the mountains
- 7pm : Dinner
- 8:30pm : Rest; Integration of the day's activities; Possibility to share films, writing, music and various other inspirations arising from the week's experiences

There will be regular breaks, during which you are free to rest, relax around the house and garden, or go walking in the mountains.



## Further information

The retreat will take place in a renovated house adapted especially to meet our communal needs. Accommodation will be in the house and possibly in neighbouring houses, depending on the number of participants.

Our cook will prepare delicious vegetarian meals using organic/local ingredients in harmony with our surroundings and the practices we will be integrating during the week.

## Practical information

The house is situated in the hamlet of La Ruzole, at an altitude of 900m, in a valley which is part of the Ariège-Pyrenees Regional Park. The closest towns are Foix and Tarascon sur Ariège. From Toulouse with its international airport, it is about a 1.5 hour train ride to Tarascon sur Ariège. There are also train connections (though more complex) between Barcelona and Tarascon sur Ariège. We will be happy to come and meet you at the train station.

Arrival : Sunday 12th August (dinner around 7pm)

Program : Monday 13th to Friday 17th August

Departure : Saturday 18th August (after breakfast)

The full package, including transport from Tarascon sur Ariège, 6 nights' accommodation, vegetarian meals, guided practices, walks and other surprises will be €700. A total reduction of €70 will be offered to couples. The retreat will go ahead with a minimum of 6 and maximum of 12 participants, to be booked by 10<sup>th</sup> July. A booking deposit of €150 will be required. In case of cancellation with more than one month's notice, you will be refunded €100. In case of cancellation with less than one month's notice, unfortunately no refund can be given.

For more information and bookings, please contact:

Ruth Bentley:

tel : +33 7 81 49 59 62

mail : [ruthbentley@yahoo.com](mailto:ruthbentley@yahoo.com)

Olivier Lelouch :

tel : +33 6 86 45 57 26

mail : [olivier.lelouch@gmail.com](mailto:olivier.lelouch@gmail.com)

[www.mbsr-toulouse.com](http://www.mbsr-toulouse.com)



## Your hosts and teachers

### **Ruth Bentley**

I have been passionate about music since early childhood, starting with piano, followed later by guitar, harp, ngoni, ukulele, kalimba and various other instruments, accompanied all the while with my voice, which has found in expression in all sorts of contexts, from choirs and bands to solo performances and sound massages.

I spent three years teaching music and running choirs/percussion groups in schools in England before becoming a private tutor which gave me a lot of creative freedom to develop music projects with teenage students. I have written many songs for both adults and children, mainly inspired by the wonders of the natural world, the complexities of human nature and, more recently, the miracles of mindfulness.

I have regularly been practicing yoga for the last 18 years and, more recently since 2012, mindfulness meditation regularly at Thich Nhat Hanh's Plum Village for the last five years, which has been an incredible support in my struggle with chronic Lyme disease, diagnosed three years ago after ten years of unexplained symptoms. I have since become fascinated in how sound and silence both play an integral role in the healing process, following training programs in sound healing (Spain), music therapy (France) and mindfulness teaching for people living with chronic health conditions, pain, stress, fatigue and depression (England).

### **Olivier Lelouch**

For nearly 30 years, I have been deeply committed to the journey which has led me to encounter, learn and integrate different approaches in the worlds of psychology and physical therapy. I currently give one-to-one sessions and run group workshops in physical therapies based in both traditional Asian medicine and western methods.

Meditation has also played an important role in my life for the last 25 years, with daily practice and retreats in various monasteries and meditation centres throughout Asia and Europe. I am also trained by the IMA (Institute for Mindfulness-based Approaches) and also teach the MBSR program using mindfulness practices for stress reduction.

Since 2009, I have been opening up my mountain home for retreats and workshops as I feel that the beautiful natural surroundings there inspire a deep and transformational mindfulness practice, which I am passionate about sharing with others.

