

NATURAL VOICE LEADERS' TRAINING 2021

With Frankie Armstrong and Sarah Harman
Visiting Tutor Darien Pritchard

Modular training

Bristol

16th to 19th July 2020 AND 6th to 9th August 2021

(N.B. Participants must attend both modules)

Week-long course

Abbey Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

8th to 15th October 2021

Frankie Armstrong and Sarah Harman will lead this training and will be joined by visiting tutor Darien Pritchard. (See biographies below). The Natural Voice Leaders' Training has been running since 1988 and it offers a unique opportunity to attend an intensive, residential training course focusing on the melodic natural voice, in beautiful surroundings in rural Oxfordshire. It is designed for people who already run voice workshops or singing groups, those who wish to, or those who want to incorporate voice into their existing work. Sarah and Frankie intend to model the importance of finding dynamic relaxation, using imagination and humour, and remembering that laughing is one of the best things for the body and voice. In addition to individual and group activities to help people focus on their own needs in these areas, we also look at:

- working on and making the most of your own voice,
- the appropriate stepping stones to help others make the most of their voices,
- the process of working with groups,
- creating and setting up improvisations,
- structuring and pacing workshops,
- dealing with difficult situations/individuals,
- contexts in which this approach can be applied,
- starting and sustaining choirs and other groups.

In addition to all of the above, participants will be given a course handbook, with a comprehensive number of exercises and practical information on areas around freelance working as a voice leader. They will also receive a CD with exercises for the body, the breath and the voice, and ways of exploring vocal technique.

As well as bodywork being an integral part of the training course, there are daily body/voice preparation sessions, focusing on aspects of body release and energizing that relate directly to vocal expression.

In addition to this daily physical preparation, visiting specialist Darien Pritchard will help participants understand the anatomy around breathing and will use his expertise as a Feldenkrais teacher to help participants maximize vocal release.

Please look at the **About** page of the **Natural Voice Network website** (www.naturalvoice.net) for a clear outline of the style and approach of this course. Even if you have attended a workshop with Frankie or Sarah before, we would both like to have a chat with you prior to booking to ensure that this is the right course for you and to make a personal connection. Please phone Frankie (+44) 029

2048 0429 or Sarah on (+44) 1874 713 184.

Abbey Sutton Courtenay:

- **ACCOMMODATION:** Accommodation is in twin or single rooms in the Abbey's guest house. Bathrooms are shared and some rooms have sinks.
- **FOOD:** is delicious, freshly cooked vegetarian.
For **Special Diets**, contact the Abbey at least one week before the course.
- **ACCESS:** For **access enquiries**, contact Abbey Sutton Courtenay direct.
- **LOCATION:** Detailed information on Abbey Sutton Courtenay can be found on their website www.theabbey.uk.com. The nearest bus and train stations are at Didcot Parkway (from where a taxi or bus can be taken). We will give you fellow participant's contact details close to the course time to facilitate lift sharing.
Abbey Sutton Courtenay, 01235 847401 admin@theabbey.uk.com

TIMES:

To be confirmed.

COST:

To be confirmed.

[Note: Some past participants have managed to organise grants from Arts Training bodies, appropriate charitable bodies, through workplace further training and retraining schemes, and via "Arts and Business".]

Applications: Sarah Harman - sarahharmany@btinternet.com

THE TUTORS



FRANKIE ARMSTRONG (www.frankiearmstrong.com) has sung professionally in the folk scene and the women's and the peace movements since the 1960s. She pioneered community voice workshops in 1975. She continued her previous trade as a trainer in social and youth work alongside the voice workshops for a decade, before focusing exclusively on the voice workshops and singing. Frankie has made 10 solo albums as well as featuring on numerous shared and themed recordings, contributed chapters to 11 books, has written an autobiography (*As Far As the Eye Can Sing*) and co-

edited *Well Tuned Women* (on women and voice) with Jenny Pearson. Her most recent book (with Janet Rogers) is *Acting and Singing with Archetypes*. It was her passion for the traditional styles of singing in the British Isles and from around the world that informed the development of her voice and singing workshops. Having been involved with folk and political songs since the 1950s, she's always been fascinated by the way that voice can enhance the individual's sense of well being and also develop a sense of community. It can link us to the thread of song that comes down to us from our ancestors. Hence she has always been interested in exploring voice and song in its historical, cultural, political and spiritual dimensions. She also sees the voice as a tool to aid our self-expression, creativity and confidence. Over the past two and a half decades she has especially focused on the body-voice connection, having worked and trained with a variety of bodywork and movement teachers.

Whatever the focus of the workshop, she believes in creating a supportive, generous atmosphere where people do not feel judged or under pressure to get things "right". The intention is to help us all find a creative balance between relaxation and energy. Over the years she has run workshops with almost every kind of group – for children of all ages and abilities, professional theatre companies, community and women's groups, people with disabilities, drama students, therapists, psychiatric patients, folk song students and the elderly. And for over 30 years, she has taken 'apprentices' and run training groups (often with Darien Pritchard) to pass on her approach and style of voice work. In London, Frankie is a guest teacher at the Central School of Speech and Drama (both on the drama therapy course and the Voice MA), and worked regularly at the National Theatre Studio. She has been a tutor at International Voice Conferences in the UK, Australia and North America. She is President and founder of the Natural Voice Network (UK), which grew out of these training weeks, and is an honorary member of the Voice and Speech Trainers Association (VASTA) of North America, and has been awarded the Gold Badge for 2018 by the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

SARAH HARMAN



Sarah originally trained and worked in the theatre, and has been leading singing workshops and choirs since 1988. She has led groups with absolute beginners, disabled people, young people on probation, and in schools, hospices, hospitals and community settings, and has worked in Nicaragua, Australia France and Spain. She is particularly passionate about working with disadvantaged communities, and believes that singing together in harmony is a fantastic way of bringing people together in supportive community.

Sarah currently runs two community choirs in South Wales and regular 'Music and Memories' sessions for people with dementia. She will bring her experience of establishing and leading long term groups to the Voice Leaders' training.

With a strong belief that leading workshops requires considerable skill, awareness and planning, Sarah has developed workshop materials and exercises to help singers gain the ability and learn techniques for leading effective, inclusive and inspirational workshops.

She has been designing and running training for workshop leaders and voice teachers since the early '90s, and worked as Training Manager for Community Music Wales for whom she continues to design and run regular training for new and experienced community music tutors. She has also worked for the Arts Council of Wales and leads training for Citizens Advice (on Training and Supervision Skills, Mental Health and Dealing with Aggression).

Sarah is a song-writer and regular performer in styles ranging from folk to Baroque classical music. She sings with the duo Blameless Hussies and with her quartet, The Quiet Ranters. The songs she writes and sings are witty and thoughtful, bringing together the personal and the political.

Sarah and Frankie

Sarah and Frankie have run a variety of trainings and workshops together over the past two decades. These include Access and Inclusion, group-work skills, voice development and improvisation, as well as teaching songs from a variety of cultures and those that focus on social justice. They also perform together.



DARIEN PRITCHARD (www.dynamicmassage.co.uk)

Darien has been a body worker for 35 years, including 25 of training massage professionals. He is qualified practitioner of massage and the Feldenkrais

Method® of movement awareness. For 12 years, he was a co-director of the Massage Training Institute, a UK-wide organization of holistic massage schools, and for 5 years taught massage in a university degree course.

For 25 years he has run a programme of professional development workshops for massage practitioners. He coauthored a student textbook *Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology for the Massage Therapist* (2001), and wrote the career-maintenance reference book *Dynamic Body use for Effective, Strain-Free Massage* (2007). He and Frankie have run workshops together for 25 years (including the training courses since 1988). Darien provides the detailed bodywork component that prepares the body for free vocal expression and aids understanding of aspects of our anatomy and their relevance to giving voice.