

Frankie Armstrong

Frankie Armstrong 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.