

The Reiki Songbook
Vision Statement of Brian Brunius
with guidance from Cynthia Faust, Ellen Montague, and Paul Vasile

Background

Hawayo Takata practiced Usui Shiki Ryoho in Hawaii from the 1930s, and taught widely in North America from 1973 to 1981. In that time she initiated more than 2,000 students and 22 acknowledged Reiki Masters. After she died, many of her students looked for others who shared their experiences of Takata and Reiki, and naturally they formed communities.

Among those communities that continue today are the Northwest Reiki Gathering and The Reiki Alliance. Both groups hold an annual gathering, generally conducted in a circle with all participants facing each other. Music features prominently in the ceremonial and communal aspects of these gatherings.

I have been lucky to witness some great community leaders using songs to keep our communities energized, gentle-hearted, inspired, and vibrant. I go home every year humming the theme song for weeks or months, recalling the energy of the group and experiencing again the gifts I carry with me from that gathering. And I notice each year that our talented musical leaders are getting older and older, most in their 60s and 70s now. The creators of these Reiki songs are also getting older, and some have already passed away. I have not seen the same level of engagement or skill in using or composing music for the community from younger members who, without encouragement, would likely sit around the circle looking at their cell phones and texting each other.

My Vision

I envision enlisting others who value the power of songs to enhance community at Reiki events to join me in the work of gathering, propagating, and handing down this music. I see five components to the project.

1. Archive Project

Collect and preserve the songs of global Reiki communities in any language, with sheet music, lyrics, audio and video recording of the original composer singing their songs (when possible), and recordings of the songs being used in community.

2. Reiki Songs Web Site

Build and maintain a dedicated site to share these archived Reiki songs. Anyone anywhere will be invited to submit his or her own Reiki songs for inclusion. The domain name will be reikisongbook.com.

3. Training Guides

Develop resources for Reiki communities on how to incorporate Reiki songs into their gatherings and community events, classes, and Reiki circles. This could include

video interviews with song leaders and circle facilitators who are excellent at sensing the energy of a group and using music and movement to work with the group dynamics.

4. Coaching

Provide resource list of coaches and/or produce Zoom or in-person workshops and one-on-one coaching for community organizers on how to incorporate music and song in their communities. It would be great to capture these Zoom sessions and have a web site collection of them so others can benefit from them in the future.

5. Songwriter Series

Produce a YouTube series of interviews with Reiki songwriters telling their story of how the songs came to them, when they were first performed publicly, and the creators singing their songs for the camera. These videos could serve several different purposes. In addition to preserving Reiki history and songs, the stories could inspire the next generation of Reiki songwriters, as well as serve as a publicity tool and social media vehicle for the Reiki Community Music Project.

Getting Started – 2020 – Gathering

I'm eager to plunge into this ambitious adventure—starting with gathering an organic, vibrant circle of support and expertise! Reiki Master Diane Domondon has teamed up with me to serve as Project Coordinators. We are happy to have enlisted the support of several Advisers: Reiki Masters Cynthia Faust and Ellen Montague, and Paul Vasile of Music That Makes Community. You can read our brief bios, below.

The next step is to identify a small group of Contributors willing to share their songs for a pilot website, to be launched by the end of 2020. Our goal is to present 12 to 15 songs.

We will secure the musician/composer's permission and a signed release form allowing us to include their songs on the The Reiki Songbook web site. We hope they may be able to provide sheet music, lyrics, and a recording of themselves singing their songs. If they can't, we have musicians who can listen to the songs and write the sheet music and make recordings of them.

This first version of the web site will be a song repository, with videos hosted on YouTube and music files on SoundCloud. We will begin by drawing on the Northwest Reiki Gathering songbook, its contributors, and Reiki Masters who have contributed their music in The Reiki Alliance international gatherings. The second phase in late 2020 will be to add an upload tool so people who have written Reiki songs can sign an online release form and upload the lyrics and recordings of their songs for possible inclusion.

Throughout the year, Coordinators, Advisers, and Contributors will meet quarterly via Zoom or Skype. These virtual meetings will provide practical mileposts for the work and, most importantly, the energetic good will and harmony of the circle.

Next Phase – 2021 – Propagation

The work of the Gathering phase can be done without funding. However, moving forward with the Propagation phase will require us to start fundraising—perhaps \$10,000 in year two. Costs will likely include travel to shoot videos of song creators presenting their songs to Reiki communities. We will begin the creation of training guides and training videos, which will be added to a new section of the web site. Music educators, community facilitators, and song leaders will be invited to the new experimental online forum for a training series, to share Reiki music and experiences of using music to inspire and motivate Reiki communities. Private coaching by experienced circle facilitators may be available as well.

Ongoing Work – 2022 and Beyond – Workshops

Paid educators will conduct in-person and Zoom circles around the world. This level of work will require financial support, and it is likely we could get grants from some kind of musical foundation. Ideas include a Musical Journey program to help people experience the power of song, Songwriting Workshops to encourage the next generation, and Leadership Trainings. In 2022 the world Reiki communities will be gathering in Kyoto, Japan for the 100th anniversary of Reiki. It may be possible to introduce the project there, and even hold demonstration events where skilled facilitators take groups of 25 Reiki masters through an energetic and emotional journey using song.

Project Coordinators

Brian Brunius lives in New York City where he operates the NYC Reiki Center, teaching Reiki classes, holding Reiki circles for his community of students, and working one-on-one with private Reiki clients. He has been inspired by Reiki songs used in community gatherings to propose this Reiki Community Music Project. Prior to making Reiki his full time occupation he was a producer at WNET, the flagship PBS station in New York where he produced hundreds of projects for more than 12 years, and served as director of production for a department of 25 web producers.

Diane Domondon is a Reiki master and avid music listener based in New York City where she offers treatments and teaches classes at NYC Reiki Center. Over the past 2 decades, she has worked in publicity for many U.S. media companies including MTV: Music Television, Scholastic, served for many years as Director of Communications for the journalist Bill Moyers and currently works on national documentary, arts and public affairs productions for PBS.

Project Advisors

Cynthia Faust is a Reiki master in Portland, Oregon who, over the last 25 years, has served on the boards of both the Northwest Reiki Gathering and The Reiki Alliance. She has used song extensively in both communities as well as in her Reiki classes

and workshops. Having worked with many non-profit organizations over the years, she understands how high ideals require humility, humor, and grounding to prosper. Cynthia offers this project her passionate commitment to creating community.

Ellen Montague is a Reiki Master and Massage Therapist in Salem, Oregon. Music has been a central part of her life for as long as she can remember: listening to parents and grandparents sing and play around the fire at night, singing with friends, leading community songs and creative music at the Northwest Reiki Gathering and other group functions, some public performance and a bit of song writing have punctuated her years. She finds the invitation that music offers us all to lean into life's beauty, harmony, connection, delight, passion, and variety to be an inspiration and a place of solace; and the intersection of our interior lives with the accessible nature of sound a guidepost to be trusted and explored.

Paul Vasile is a song leader and composer committed to modeling and sharing leadership practices that sustain the musical and spiritual life of communities. As the Executive Director of Music that Makes Community, he offers training, resources, and support to an international network of faith leaders who practice oral tradition singing, grounded in a spirit of welcome and generosity.

Additionally, Paul is a consultant and workshop facilitator who uses singing as a modality to support healing, deep listening, and conflict resolution. Over the last four years, his work has brought him to faith communities, seminaries, and conferences of almost every mainline Protestant denomination in the United States and Canada.

Committed to expressing and exploring faith in new ways, Paul composes music that celebrates Mystery, Love, spiritual pilgrimage, queerness, and the natural world. His work is represented in *Glory to God*, the recent hymnal of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and he has written extensively for St. Lydia's and Not So Churchy, innovative, justice-centered faith communities in New York City.

Project Sponsor

Reiki Centers of America, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization committed to training and empowering Reiki practitioners and Reiki Masters to develop successful Reiki Centers and thriving Reiki communities in North America. We create and distribute materials for the teaching of Reiki classes, and provide ongoing support for Reiki Masters and for our Certified Reiki Practitioners.