

SARAH TYLER-WALTERS  
TRANCE MEDIUM

## Reflections on the seance trumpet

By Sarah Tyler-Walters

One of the joys of working at the College is its history. The College has been at the heart of spiritual work in London since its opening and has always embraced the current techniques. Many of you are familiar with the word Seance – a gathering with a medium to invite the spirit of those who have passed to communicate with the living – but did you know they were held at the College.

These have been widely written about since the mid 1800's and range from evenings of clairvoyance to phenomena; though the emphasis was originally on Physical Mediumship . History is littered with stories of what did and did not occur. But little focus has been given to one rather strange piece of equipment – The Seance Trumpet or Megaphone. Seances used various tools to assist spirit in communicating, these included chalk and board, small tables and even bowls of water.

Spirit communication in the 1800 and 1900's was focused on proof of survival and these tools were used to confirm a non-physical being was present. Table tipping and rapping's were common so was the use of the Seance Trumpet. Spirit would use the trumpet, much like a modern day megaphone, and project their voice through it. The participants would hear, audibly, the voice of a loved one speaking to them. Trumpets would also be used for levitating and would be seen to lift from the table and move around. As physical mediumship evolved these tools were used less as seance cabinets came to the forefront and ectoplasm was manifested.

Over the years physical mediumship drifted away from the public eye as clairvoyance became the more common form of communication, though it has never stopped. Since the late 1900's it has had a revival. Today's physical mediumship circles are again using seances trumpets to allow spirit to be heard as in-direct voice. They are seen to move and emit smoke-like energy. Spirit, ever evolving the way they work, use modern day equivalents to produce sound phenomena with EVP.

Personally, I like the old tools. Last year, I was allowed to handle a few of the college's trumpets and compare them to my modern one. A seance trumpet is generally an aluminium cone of varying height and diameter. It was fascinating holding the antique trumpets, the energy they held was palpable as compared to mine which felt cold and lifeless. Moreover, my students could pick my one out

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from the old just by the feel of the energy. Physical mediumship requires a build up of energy at the time of working as well as a long term build up in the objects and furniture used. The same applies to Seance Cabinets. Though we did not get any spirit voices from the trumpets we did all feel and see the energy around them and even saw a little wobble.

Modern day mediumship owes a lot to the past and those who experimented on spirit's behalf. Though it is important for us to look forward and embrace new techniques and ideas, we must balance that with an understanding of the past and what has already been achieved.

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