

Welcome at the Hangbauhaus!

Quite some time has passed since you first wrote to PANArt. Lots of water has flowed down the Aare, as we say here. We thank you for your patience and that you have gone to the trouble of coming here. Relax yourself, eat, drink and read this article; then find your way from room to room where you can find the matured Free Integral Hanghang. Maybe you will take one home with you.

With the presentation of the Free Integral Hang we have decided to write down a few thoughts from our trove of experience, so that your time here is spent free from unnecessary burdens. Enjoy your time here as the waves on the Aare ripple gently by. Should you be interested in learning more about our 30 years of research with the sound of metal, we will be happy to share our thoughts and – if you like – we will also show you the technology behind our methods of making the hang.



This hang guide can make your access to playing the hang easier. Your own personal history with the hang is also a history of a challenge which began the first time you were aware of the sound. If you succeed in letting your hands glide and in listening, a deep and strengthening feeling will be activated. Without true dedication, the hang will remain mute and fall short of its effect. For this reason we have invited you: your letter spoke of your awareness of the power of the hang sound, to open doors – to inner worlds.

Proceed to the Hanghaus by the Aare where the Free Integral Hanghang are available. Take a hang and sit on the hang stool – it has the proper height, both feet are on the floor. When the vault with the resonance hole GU is looking upward towards you, you can start exploring:



If you hit the GU with the palm of your hand you will hear a dark, breathy sound. You are activating the air resonance of the instrument. The air in the curved neck resides on the air inside the receptacle. The hang is breathing. You can induce this deep breathy sound anywhere on the instrument: you will always stimulate the air which is induced by the GU. This deep sound is always present with each stimulation of this body. Let your hands dance on the vault and integrate this hollow sound in your playing. If you change the dimension of the resonance opening with one hand, the GU sinks. Stimulating the rim of the neck emits a bright, oscillating GURING sound. Enjoy this sparse sound landscape. It is suitable for making your hands more elastic and getting used to the vault. Can you hear in the distance the sound cosmos from the other side?

The date of manufacture and the name of the hang makers are engraved near the equator of the hang. Now let the slightly oval underside glide into your lap. If you feel the inscription between your knees, the hang has the correct position for getting to know the hang choir.

The center is the DING. There are seven voices spread around the dome. If you stimulate this dome at any point, a variegated sound mix will appear. Stronger stimulation opens the sound more. You have entered a room. The inner ear senses a cosmic expanse, the visual sense is weaker and you begin to hear – to hark.



Discover the sound sculpture on your own. There is an order to the harmony as well to how the instrument is played. When playing the hang starting from where your stomach is and alternating right to left, an order to the colors of the sounds begins to unfold, from dark to bright, from deep to high. The sounds the hang body has revealed through the past years have evolved into a dynamic sound sculpture:

The already described air resonance of the body appears when the hang is in its correct position on your lap. The sound is an octave from the DING. Open or close your lap while stimulating the DING: you can feel how the GU and the DING find each other. You are united with the hang.

With the seven tones of the choir you can play around the DING in various ways. You enter into an circular interplay, not unlike a body of flowing water. Greater and weaker pressure, soothing and sharp movements, opening and closing musical gestures unfold a rich palette of expressions. This is not drumming! In its genial diversity, the hand can convey force in highly differentiated modes. Head-on beating is unsuitable here! A culture of dosage is required because the free hang reacts extremely sensitively to each contact. You should preferably close your eyes and sink into a state of inner peace.



Maybe you would like to put the hang aside, like a hot potato. Approach it again, as you would approach something precious, something intimate. Stimulate the DING and its corona with your thumb or fingers. Listen. You are introducing energy – the choir is beginning to sing. Let your hands follow this chant. Or notice the bright sound made by the touch. Or follow the harmonic centers which can be found on this hemisphere of the instrument. Betake yourself in your imagination, where the contact takes place, to your fingertips, where the purest emotions of your soul are felt, to your hands, which touch the shoulder around the DING and intensify the air resonance. Unfold your own hang language, which you and only you can speak.

You will slowly get used to your Free Hang and its elastic landscape, to the increasing mobility of your hands and arms, even your entire body. Do not set yourself on a melody or rhythm – always start with little energy. Pay attention to the DING, it can be a gateway: can you hear how the sound brightens and widens the brilliance of the space? This is the quint, embraced in each voice of the choirs. The quint sounds surrounding your hang are beguiling, a singsong arising from the tongues of angels. Can you feel the tension in your fingertips when you touch your hang? When your hands glide over the surface of the hang, there is a refreshing rustle.

Immersed in this intensive listening, where appellative thoughts are dismissed, breath seizes its position. Trust this surge! In this dream-like state you are completely yourself. This is healing and lends strength. You may encounter everyday life more vigilantly, discern the nearby more closely. Playing the hang is an intimate, personal moment, even a sacred instant. This is only possible if you can listen undisturbed. The intimate dialog with the hang can easily be troubled. It becomes difficult if you are on a stage and people want something from you. Should you try to fulfill musical forms you will quickly encounter limitations. The Free Integral Hang is meant to propagate the finest vibrations from the depths of the soul.



If you sense the vibrations in your hands when they are gliding closely over the hang, you are close to where it's happening. Those who have perceived the dynamic dimension of the Free Integral Hang will let their hands speak. If your hands hit the dome from afar, the phonetic experience is dis severed and the harmonic flow dispersed. The dynamic is strained, the measure is exceeded that it hurts the ears. The breath eludes and the trivial takes over. In playing the hang like a drum, it loses its ability to answer. A different kind of listening sets in: rhythmic structures are perceived, melodies are created intentionally, and the eyes open themselves, tempting virtuosity and controlling skill.

During the past years we hang makers have created a kind of material making it possible to design a highly sensitive resonance body. Each touch is as unique as the effervescence of a spring. This is what it's all about: you create a room and make yourself comfortable. You demand nothing, you give nothing. You do not make music, you do not exploit the room. You want nothing – other than a timeless action, emptiness emerges.

People are born and people die. Should you want to convey something to others, try to incorporate your hang playing in this circle of life: in times of need and grief, in times of deep-felt joy, or in speechless moments. Play the hang for the praise of being!



The Free Integral Hang and its sentiment to tuning

Over the past ten years word-of-mouth accounts, written attestations and acoustic documents clearly point out that the hang has opened new venues for people, be they players or the audience. They sense a new involvement in the cosmic order. The experiences in playing the hang are linked with flowing images, images of growth and blossoming. One rediscovers his senses, turns his attention to the world around him, gets to know different states of consciousness, and experiences the sense of joy and happiness, of inner tranquility and serenity.

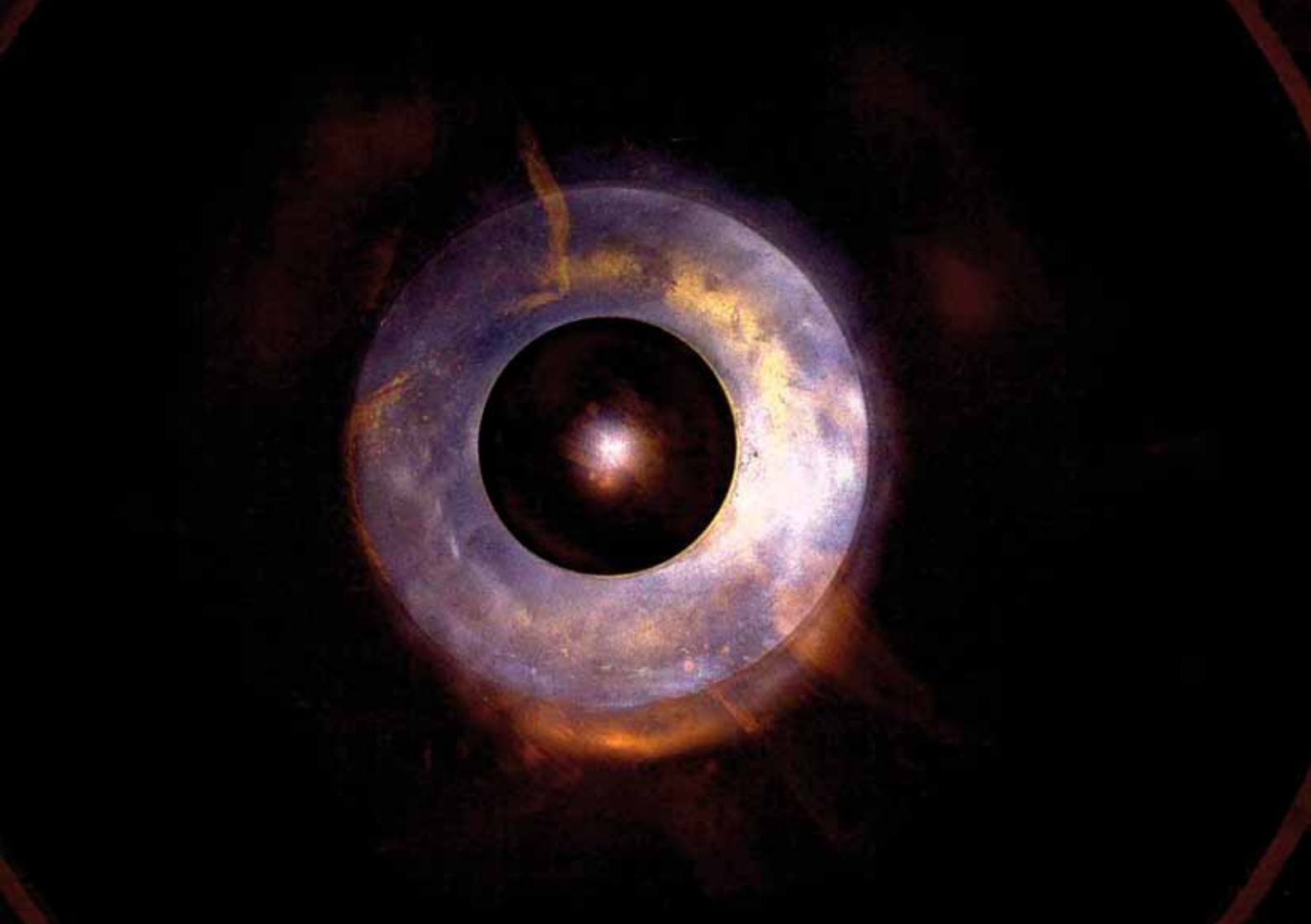
This encouraged us to entirely abandon the tone systems, the equal temperament and the technical tuners. For years we studied tone systems. Our ears have opened up to the more profound dimensions in hearing, called harking. Everyone is aware of the significance of hearing. Human beings begin hearing sounds and noise already as two-month-old embryos, and the sense of hearing is the last one to cease to exist during death. More and more we began to know the hang as a voice and to play it accordingly. Its instrumental character became part of the background. Tuning a hang without using any instruments signified our liberation. The new profoundness of harking became a great joy – the inner ear was dependable.

We continue to include closely related intervals such as the octave and the fifth (quint above the octave) in the Free Integral Hang. Through free tuning it is possible to improve and strengthen the inner harmonic relationship of the hang choir. The basic character of our sound sculpture, its nature of brightening and widening, provides us with the possibility of integrating non-harmonic elements and thus to additionally enrich the dynamic. Moreover, we take into account that oscillations are not only heard through the ear, but also penetrate body and soul. This important characteristic is evident in all strongly emanating sound bodies such as gongs, bells, gamelans, steel pans, to which the hang also belongs.

About the art of tuning

The Free Integral Hang originates usually in the morning as a result of concentrated work. The path to the smooth sound begins with a noisy and vehement action. High-energy material is distended, hardened and tightened through hammer blows. After the first steps it must have the approximately correct form and exhibit correctly distributed tension. The tension is balanced and selectively reduced through the controlled use of the oven. The result is the good sound quality and the soft dynamic.

The language used by the hang makers and the manner in which they treat their material can be read in their work. A harmonically flowing form suggests a harmonic whole. The hang makers coax sound from noise and chaos. Harking, they follow their inner sound bouquet. Through daily practice, the art of combining hammering and harking improves and matures to the point where they can depend entirely on intuition. The path to form and sound is paved largely by the maker: from dozens of factors influencing the making of a steel instrument, he chooses the ones which suit him. The steel pan maker from Trinidad will tune his steel pan with a sharp sound for Carnival, the maker of meditation steel drums in Europe will tune his instrument like the strings of a violin, and the hang maker will tune his hang to meet the sensitivity of his hands.



Each metal instrument maker will create his own euphonic landscape and must learn how to deal with the manifold forces. In addition, he must accept that knowledge alone is never sufficient. Making hang-hang is an action, a lending of truth, just as playing the hang is. No machine will ever be able to replace a hang maker. Therefore, we are rather unperturbed by the thought of hang copies or those who dream about mass production with the use of robots.

This insight is the result of a long journey through the world of sounds from different cultures. Thirty years of practice in listening to the hammering has brought us to a quality that we hang makers are proud of. The gentle landscape with its dome and indentations are a witness of this journey. The result is a harmonic flowing architecture which likes human hands. There is no standard pitch or any tonal system which forces us to wrench something from the metal that it is not willing to give.

The result is not a musical instrument in the European sense: tuning isolated notes to a correct pitch in a vault has proved to be unsuitable. The individual tone is weak, flat und in no way touches that which is important to us, namely the creation of a space. It is only here where the quality of such a sound sculpture can rest, in the cosmic clarity.



The physicists have time and again explained the complexity of such a sound body. It's all about dynamics. Does the sound body have a wide choice of colors? Is it possible to speak a sophisticated language? Is the sound language clear and free of strains? Is it possible to speak the language of the soul? If a metal instrument maker can answer these questions, a functioning sound body will be the result. Each one will have a different form; each one will have its own sentiment.

Our knowledge about oscillations and vibrations in musical instruments, about metal and the laws of working with metal, about the construction of metal instruments: we have given all of this to the public domain. We cannot build a hang making school with this knowledge. Mass production is not possible. And a step back to inferior quality is out of question. Each hang has to be built with devotion. We are staying with it! Step by step. Are you interested in the history of the hang? We do not service our own website, but you can learn a lot under www.hangblog.org which is under the competent operation by Michael Paschko.

Practical tips

The hang consists of a new form of sheet steel which PANArt has developed during the past 25 years. We call this high-energy material PANG. Its surface exhibits a non-metallic character. Its crystalline structure is reminiscent of ceramic. Your hands are touching a skin-friendly playing vault. It has been treated and withstands corrosion.

Your Free Integral Hang is optimally protected in its natural fiber case. Never put your moist hang in the case, you might experience unpleasant surprises. Flash rust may set in. If you play in the vicinity of an ocean, clean your hang afterwards. Your hang does not savor saline solutions. You may also clean your hang with rubbing alcohol. Use the cleaning fluid which we will provide you with. A few squirts a few times a year spread over the hang with a clean cloth are sufficient. Do not play your hang with gloves or with drumsticks. Since your hang has been designed for direct contact, it makes no sense to castigate or force the dynamic.

Play your hang with measure and it will retain its balance and harmony. Should an accident occur, contact us under hangrepair@gmx.ch or send us a Fax (0041 (0) 31 301 33 32) or a letter. You will receive an answer advising you how to proceed. Do not give your hang into unknown hands without a second glance. All too often something happens and you are irritated. Also, be careful when customs agents unpack this unknown object.

PANArt Hangbau AG
Engenhaldenstr. 131
3012 Bern
Switzerland

© All rights reserved for both word and image.

The terms PANArt and Hang are registered trade marks, and the property of PANArt Hangbau AG.

Translation by Christine Studer, Bern.

Fotos by Basil Rohner, Felix Rohner, Sari Hason, Daniel Wietlisbach.

Printing: Basisdruck und Gestaltung, Bern