

26.02.2005 *The Times* Lie back for the light show

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Can a mix of water, music and colour therapy be healing? **Sorrell Downer** lets it all sink in

Midnight in the Liquid Sound Temple and I'm bobbing on the surface of a warm, saltwater pool, watching lights play on the dome above, surrounded by music – and bathing Germans.

Someone is gently pushing and pulling my leg so I'm undulating; stretching out and packing up like a Z-bed. The interplay of water, light and music both above and below the water, with massage, manipulation and relaxation techniques, is the basis for Liquid Bodywork, the most sought-after treatment at Toskana Therme, a spa in Bad Sulza

cky Remann, who recognised the potential of underwater music and pioneered the concept, but it was initially intended only as a form of light relief. However, it was soon apparent that the combination of music, lights and water induced a state of deep relaxation that was a catalyst for the healing process of stress-related illnesses.

Toskana Therme has seven indoor and outdoor pools, a dozen rooms for hot-stone-therapy, mud wraps, aromatherapy and body scrubs located in and around a futuristic construction of glass, un-

movement that can help with realignment and strengthening of the spine and release of muscle tension. Colour therapy is a more nebulous area. Studies into the use of colour as therapy have been inconclusive and so, at the spa, the spectacular light show is principally for pleasure. And, as for the music, which varies from classical to singing whales, it is understood that we are physically affected by the vibratory resonance of sound, and psychoacoustic studies show that exposure to rhythm can change breathing and heart rates –

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This is clearly no ordinary dip in the pool. But deciding where Liquid Bodywork should sit on the spectrum between fun and healing is no easy job. It was not a therapist but an artist and writer, Mi-

der a lofty vaulted roof. The Liquid Sound Temple where sessions take place is a dark hive at one end. The sessions are carried out on a one-to-one basis, with a trained practitioner, and start with an opportunity to discuss any specific medical concerns.

So does it work? Well, if stress-relief is your goal, you can't do better than to start in water. Relative weightlessness allows for a greater fluidity of

but music also works on an emotional level.

Put together, it's a well-orchestrated attack on tension. "Each person comes with a different body and expectations, and a different ability to let go," Bus says. "Others hold a lot of tension."

All around me are people who have succumbed to Liquid Bodywork, utterly limp and malleable. Total immersion is clearly the key.



Pooling resources: floating for health in Toskana Therme