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Joseph Carringer
Photo by [Rich Beauchesne](#)

Exposure: Joseph Carringer, Didgeridoo player

Interivew by Andrea Bulfinch

Can't sleep? Have some muscle pain? Just want to feel more relaxed? There is a way: vibrational therapy. More specifically, having Joseph Carringer play the didgeridoo all around you while lying comfortably on a cot or mat. I'm not kidding. Maybe you've actually heard of the "didge." But chances are, it's not the first thing that comes to mind when you can't fall asleep at night or when you've got a few lingering aches and pains - but maybe it should be.

He and his wife, Nicole Salotti, run Ancient Voices Harmonic Therapy located on the second floor of the Safeway Storage building on McDonough Street. That's where the magic of the didge happens.

For information on what Joseph and the didge can do for you, or to order one of his CDs,

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ANDREA BULFINCH: How did you learn about the didgeridoo?

JOSEPH CARRINGER: I literally woke up one day in 1996 and said I'm going to play the didgeridoo.

ANDREA: Had you thought about it at all before?

JOSEPH: No. I vaguely knew what it sounded like from "Crocodile Dundee" and various movies or Foster's commercials. But I thought it was a bull-roar, I didn't know that it was a long hollow tube made of eucalyptus and found that out after the fact.

ANDREA: What made you decide to make it a career?

JOSEPH: I love to play. I found out about the harmonic therapy itself. I came from a musical background, which I absolutely love. A coworker of mine came into work one day and he told me that he'd seen this didgeridoo harmonic therapy being done on a celebrity on a VH1 special and I thought it was going to be this fluff and buff kind of spa thing. And I started doing the research just to find out more about it and found out that there was a very serious healing modality that would really help people.

ANDREA: Didgeridoo is a fun word. What does it mean?

JOSEPH: It's a Westernization of the sound that the didgeridoo makes. One of the three tribal names for the didgeridoo is Udika, and that is the traditional aborigine name. But the word didgeridoo is the description of that sound.

ANDREA: How long has vibrational medicine been practiced and where did it start?

JOSEPH: Vibrational medicine's actually older than allopathic medicine. It falls in the same category as holistic. And allopathic medicine split in the early 1900s from holistic medicine, or vibrational medicine.

ANDREA: Do you ever get mistaken for the guy in the Ricola ads?

JOSEPH: No (laughing)

ANDREA: How long does one session take?

JOSEPH: They are half-hour sessions.

ANDREA: How common is the practice?

JOSEPH: In Europe and in Australia they have harmonic therapy practitioners. There's a handful in the United States, or more than a handful. There's actually a handful on West Coast that I've heard of and there's at least one in New Hampshire. And there's one in Boston that I remember years ago reading in a Globe article. But it's not like chiropractors, they're not everywhere.

ANDREA: Is there an association, or do you get to meet those other people who play?

JOSEPH: No, actually I found some of them online and just seeing their Web sites. And I've met a woman who actually had work done on her and she's in Holland. She broke her back in a car accident and they have an integrated program where they use western medicine or allopathic medicine I should say, along with homeopathic medicine ... and they ... had two didgeridoo players that came over and worked on her back every day.

ANDREA: Are some people skeptical of didgeridoo therapy? What would you say to put them at ease?

JOSEPH: I've done work on people who have never received any type of energy work or holistic medicine and even for the most skeptical people, everyone has walked away having at least felt something and connected with something. So people generally, there are skeptics out there, but I invite anyone to come sit on the cot, check it out, and see what they feel for themselves. That's really what it is, it's a very individualized thing for people.

ANDREA: Can it be used as a musical instrument, or is it only for therapeutic uses?

JOSEPH: Yes. That's actually how I started out, playing the didgeridoo in blues, jazz and then in '99 moved into electronic music.

ANDREA: What are some benefits from this type of therapy?

JOSEPH: The reported effects that people have experienced has been relief of muscle pain, relief of anxiety, stress, greater sense of awareness, more creative. There's a really long list of ways in which the work itself, again it's very individualized, so people report different things.

ANDREA: Do some people fall asleep?

JOSEPH: Um, yeah actually, the CD... that's one of the other things - sleep aid. I have some clients that actually use it as a sleep aid, a meditative sleep aid.

ANDREA: Can you play a didgeridoo and dance at the same time?

JOSEPH: Yes. (laughing)

ANDREA: Have you tried?

JOSEPH: Yes, when I play out in the clubs, I do.

ANDREA: Does it make one tone, or many?

JOSEPH: It has a fixed key, but then inside of that fixed key there are overtones and harmonics that are produced. The playing of the instrument, everything from your diaphragm, up to your vocal chords, your lips, your mouth all become part of the instrument and that pitch bends and changes.

ANDREA: Why (in the ad) do you say the sounds are "unexplicably familiar?"

JOSEPH: The didge produces harmonics between 0 and 1000 hertz. Your brain frequencies are at 2-20 hertz. The resonate wave form of the sound the didge produces is similar to that of the Sanskrit Ohm and you break everything down into quantum physics, and the smallest particle is not actually a particle, it's a wave-form vibration that's going in and out of waves. It's an ancient sound that has the vibrational resonance that when people hear it they can't really explain why but they feel it internally.

ANDREA: Will a trumpet have the same effect?

JOSEPH: No. (laughing)

ANDREA: Not recommended, then?

JOSEPH: No. I don't know. The trumpet is a brass instrument. It plays a variety of different notes, actually. Harmonically, I don't know what it looks like on a scale compared to a didgeridoo. I couldn't answer that truthfully.

ANDREA: Why would a person want to do this instead of getting a massage?

JOSEPH: I definitely wouldn't say do it instead of a massage. I'd do it conjunction with.

Collaboratively I work with massage therapists. It's a another way to get stagnation in not only in your energetic field but also in your muscular and skeletal system moving again. That's what massage therapists are doing, that's what acupuncturists are doing. It's a nice addition to it, and that's the great thing in holistic medicine is that there is a lot of collaborative overlapping. There is no one right thing. They all work together, or different things work differently for people.

ANDREA: What would a didgeridoo symphony sound like?

JOSEPH: That's a really good question. I would love to hear one. I don't know.

ANDREA: How are the instruments made?

JOSEPH: It's a eucalyptus tree branch or trunk that's been naturally hollowed out by a specific species of termites that only eats the heart-wood out of the tree and the branch of tree trunk is taken, cut to a specific length, planed down and you add a beeswax mouthpiece.

ANDREA: I used to play the bass clarinet. Is that a descendant of the didgeridoo? How similar are the two?

JOSEPH: I would consider the didgeridoo the ancestor of the entire woodwind line. And your brass instruments also. It's estimated to be between 40 and 80,000 years old, which would make it the oldest musical instrument next to banging sticks together or your voice. So you know if you consider voice the first instrument, percussion or some form thereof probably came right after and then the didgeridoo.

ANDREA: What does the future look like for the didgeridoo?

JOSEPH: Pretty good considering it's 40 to 80,000 years old.

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