

# Winnipeg Free Press

## GOOD VIBRATIONS

### DUO USES SPACE TO CREATE A UNIQUE AND SOOTHING EXPERIENCE

By: Brenda Suderman

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I'm familiar with the uncomfortably hard pews at Home Street Mennonite Church because that's where I worship every Sunday.

But I'm not at all used to people stretching out on those creaky dark-oak benches or lying down in the aisles for 90 minutes of profound and deep silence.



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Combining the vibrations of crystal bowls with music created by her husband Danny (left), L'aura Carroll creates a space for people to meditate and reflect.

That's exactly what happens during L'aura Carroll's crystal music sound healing meditations, held one Wednesday evening a month in this century-old West End church for the past year.

"Be aware of your breath, go inward and feel the vibrations relaxing you," Carroll says through her headset mic as she circles the edge of a large crystal bowl with a wooden mallet.

"Let the vibrations flow through you with your breath going deeper and deeper."

She combines the vibrations of the crystal bowls with

music improvised or composed by her husband and soundscape artist Danny Carroll to create a space for people to meditate and reflect.

Creating that environment includes renting a sacred space such as Home Street Mennonite, which features good acoustics for both the human voice and instruments, says Carroll, 58, who also works as a reiki master, therapeutic touch teacher and reflexology therapist.

"From the moment we walked into this healing sanctuary, we could feel the spiritual warmth of decades of worship here," says the meditation leader, who has worshipped in Roman Catholic and other Christian settings.

Despite the hard pews and lack of open space, meditating in a church feels comfortable and inviting, says regular attendee Diane Sidebottom, 55, owner of Whole Touch Natural Wellness and Spa.

"When we do non-traditional healing practices inside a traditional church, we're opening and inviting people back into a sacred space. We need that," she says.

"There's something sacred and healing of being in community."

In addition to the piano and electronic keyboard played by her husband, Carroll incorporates a drum, tuning forks, chimes, gongs, Tibetan bowls and, on this occasion, a set of 14 crystal singing bowls, graduated in size to provide a succession of pitches.

"It's sort of like our meditation Super Bowl tonight," she explains as she plays the bowls in the dimly lit church sanctuary, designed by the same architect responsible for the grand spaces of Knox United and Westminster United.

During the 90 minutes of meditation, Carroll alternates between producing sound, chanting in Sanskrit and inviting participants to imagine walking along an ocean beach.

Through it all, she is attuned to the energy in the room, filled with people experienced in mindfulness and meditation, as well as newcomers curious to see what sound healing is all about.

"When everyone comes together, there's a sound I can hear and (I can hear) where discord is and where it needs to be tuned," she says before the session.

"It's a form of connecting with source and God and everyone together creates sound and energy when we gather."

Despite the sound Carroll hears, the room seems profoundly quietly except for the vibrations pulsing through the floor and the wooden pews. Although I'm squirming from sitting still for 90 minutes, other participants sit or lie silently with their eyes closed, with the sound of their breathing barely perceptible.

"I allow the sound vibrations to enter my body and move through my body," longtime participant Liz Bochmann, 65, says.

"Just by that alone, I know there is healing going on — physical, emotional, mental."

With her husband Danny playing keyboards, Carroll gently closes the evening, inviting participants to feel gratitude and love for people and the world.

"And you're aware of sending out this feeling, the vibration of the piano and the loving energy flowing," she says in a soft voice.

"And we thank each other for the beautiful energy together (sent) out to the Earth."

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## **The sound of healing**

The next crystal music sound healing meditation takes place 7 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday at Home Street Mennonite Church, 318 Home St. Suggested donation is \$20.

Bring cushions, a blanket or a mat and wear comfortable clothes

Visit [crystalmusicssoundhealingmeditation.ca](http://crystalmusicssoundhealingmeditation.ca) for more information and to hear clips of the singing bowls and other soundscapes.

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