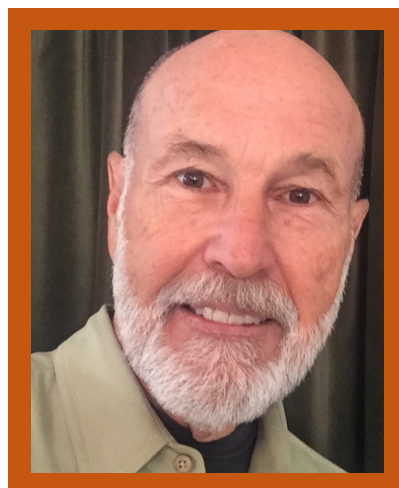


Humming into Connection

Humming. Everyone does it. Sometimes we even catch ourselves humming without realizing we're doing it.

Jim Paschal designs weekly musical experiences for participants to spontaneously share in building rhythmic melodies and harmonies through humming. Using the Harmonic Method, Jim facilitates these unique classes at the Sebastopol Area Senior Center. "I do this because I love it, and I see others do too!" Jim shares.

Jim explains that humming can empower people to discover their inherent musical ability within. "I have never met anyone who cannot hum well," he offers. Humming is intuitive. Everyone likely remembers humming as a child or to a song.



"This class is for people to have an experience, a harmonic experience. It's not a performance, and there is nothing to learn. It's just being in the moment and having an experience of how harmonies interact." Building on each person's humming tone, Jim stands in the middle of the circle and, after warm-ups, begins with a chimed pitch and then adds a rhythmic beat. "I am the rhythm keeper. I'm the metronome. I step and dance to the beat. Getting everybody on the same pitch only takes a few minutes," he proudly shares.



Jim goes on to explain, "The whole thing comes together with entrainment, and it becomes a composition of people's voices interacting in a very soft way. You have to listen because we're not projecting or performing. We're intimately having a shared experience with co-creation. I just cherish that. I think it's just - wonderful!"

Humming can be much more than just making a sound; it has several physiological and psychological benefits. Studies show that vibrations from humming can aid in airflow between the sinuses and the nasal cavities, increasing nitric oxide production, widening blood vessels, and improving blood flow.

The physical benefits of humming vibrations stimulate the vagus nerve, which regulates various bodily functions, including lowering heart rate, improving digestion, and mood. Additional benefits include lower stress levels, a stronger sense of relaxation, increased mood-boosting endorphins, and improved focus. Humming also helps the body release melatonin, which aids in better sleep patterns.

Many spiritual and healing practices utilize humming, fostering a connection with oneself and others. Jim states clearly that he does not know how the music will affect each participant. "I tell people how it affects me. The humming is a window into observing our response."

Jim does go on to explain that the experience is easily translatable into behaviors that we all know and depend on, such as relationships. "We depend on listening. We depend on hearing the other voice, letting it have space; that is the democratic part of music. Everybody gets to be a part of it," "Everyone gets to be heard," Jim humbly explains. "And then there's the co-creation of manifesting something in the moment that will never be heard again; something very charming and very wonderful," he shares.

Jim came to the SASC in 2019, briefly holding harmonic classes, until two months later, COVID protocols required the center to close. He has successfully offered these classes for over two years, with 12-16 participants joining each week. "I came to this because I wanted to do something to bring people together. Now especially, in these times, it's needed." Jim believes that experiencing harmony can bring people together. "I want to set a seed in people to recognize just what it feels like to be engaged in harmony, and have that as a grounding place, a go-to place, an additional tool in their coping and life management toolkit that they can use in their world to see others as collaborators and co-creators."

Jim is semi-retired from 50+ years as a real estate broker. "The cool thing about 'semi-retired' and this profession is - I can dip in and out easily," Jim shares. Jim grew up in southern California and was accepted at Hayward State in the early 70s. Unhappy with the area, he moved north with his girlfriend, Molly McGregor. They relocated to Sebastopol, where he attended Sonoma State. In 2012, Jim met Jeannel, and they have happily lived together in Sebastopol. "I got here and never left. That's been just great," Jim joyfully reports.

Jim found his musical interest in the army. "We had a little barracks quartet, King Richard and the Skid Marks," he giggles. "That was so much fun. We'd go to church because that was the only time they'd let us out of the barracks," he remembers.

"Music is like a parallel path for me. I feel it. It's been a way of looking at things." Jim's father was an artist and creative contractor. "He taught me about composition and perspective and how to look at things. He got me interested in drawing and helped me see. To see the dimension of things and how they come together. It's always been a fascination. You can't miss it. Once you train your eye to be calm enough to see it, you can hardly miss it. It's in everything, everywhere, all the time."

Thank you, Jim, for showing us how we are all connected and creating space for us to enjoy each other and come together in a community of harmony!

To learn more about classes at the SASC visit us at:
www.sebastopolseniorcenter.org

