



WELLNESS
BY MARLA HOOVER

VALLARTA WELCOMES

As often happens, the Universe once again played its magic over Puerto Vallarta. Kirtan-chanting recording artist Wah! was the surprise guest of Davannayoga last Friday night.

Having just finished performing at week long chanting and yoga retreat at Villa Ananda in Punta Mita, Wah! was on her way home to Los Angeles when her plane had to return to PV for an emergency landing – a small piece from the wing had fallen off. After seeing no good flight options she and her troop decided to stick around for another week.

One day as they were wandering around downtown Puerto Vallarta, they found themselves at the doorstep of Davannayoga.

This might not seem so surprising had she not met the owners who had attended a wedding at the resort while she was hosting the retreat, and who had invited her to perform on the rooftop of their yoga studio but because of time restraints she had to decline. She knocked on the door and an impromptu public concert was arranged.

While the sun gave an equaling inspiring performance, Wah! led an evening of Kirtan chanting to a privileged and enthusiastic crowd. When asked to explain her now-legal name, given to her by her yoga instructor, she said, "Wah! (complete with exclamation point) is the

name of the musician (me) and also the name of the experience (transcendental bliss) in the music. My music and my path are intertwined!"

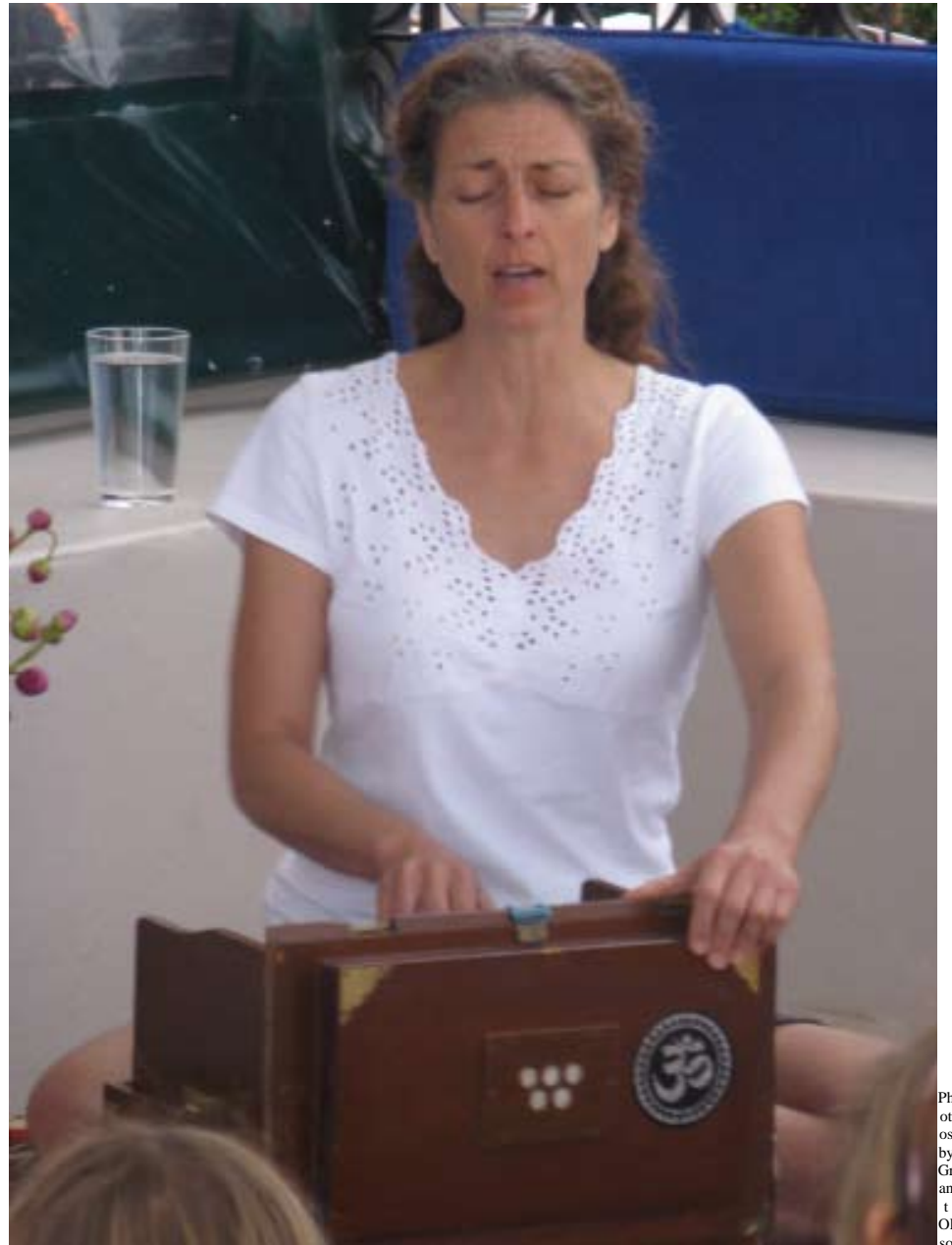
Singing what is known as call-and response chanting or Kirtan, Wah! would chant a line of Sanskrit mantras while playing an interesting looking box-shaped instrument called a harmonium, more commonly known as a squeeze box.

Harmoniums were introduced to India by the British in the colonial era and are typically used in Kirtans.

The audience would then repeat the lines and melody as they played the bells, gourds, and other percussion instruments they were given; all of this accompanied by a drummer who would keep the time and aid in starting the correct repeat chanting.

During breaks between chants, Wah! would clarify the meaning of the long strings of Sanskrit words and explain that chanting the repetition of these mantras help to settle the mind down from the non-ending story lines that play over and over in your head. "Chanting helps the storylines fall away, it brings you back to self. If there are no more storylines, wow, your mind settles into what is here now, where you can explore the depths of who you are," she said.

Kirtans roots go back over 500 years to Renaissance India, and was inspired and popularized by the great saint Sri



Photos by Grant Olson

Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. It is accepted as one of the surest paths to enlightenment as it serves to free the mind of its constant chatter. In its heartfelt expression Kirtan compares to profound states of deep meditation. The main intention of Wah!'s chanting is the sense of community she hopes to evoke. Even though her music is steeped in yoga traditions whose origins are from India, Wah! is also inspired by the African musical culture. "In Africa they 'sing story,' telling the history of their

people," she said. "I had an experience in Africa. People gather during sunrise, they drum and they dance. And as the sun rises, if there are any complaints within the community those involved are brought before the elders, and once the problems are solved you start the day just loved getting up before the sun and hearing the drums, getting together and starting the day with community. It triggered something in me, some memory in me of what spiritual life should be. I didn't know what I was looking for,

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but once I went to Africa I went, 'Oh yeah, that's right,' she explained. Chanting indigenous cultures – since many do not have TVs or Internet – get together and uplift themselves. They sing about the now. Chanting is a way of praising God but it is not religious, yet every note is deity."

Wah! has spent a lifetime immersed in music, studying in the US, India and Africa. She accompanied the Arthur Hall Dance Ensemble to Ghana and Nigeria (1978), lived in a shaman temple in Africa (1978), composed and professionally for the Angela Caponigro Dance Ensemble in NYC (1983-1989), and made various trips to in India (1989-1992). Her music reflects her travel and spiritual experiences from the world.

She received her BA in Performing Arts from Oberlin College/ Conservatory in 1979. From 1988-1993, she worked with the Cherdi Kala label, creating music products for yoga audiences. In 1993 the WAH! band was formed, performing at various conferences. Her music is a staple at yoga studios across the world. In 1995, Wah! moved to Los Angeles, where the band performed for celebrities, and built a local following. In September 1999, Wah! began touring with Krishna Das, playing bass, violin and tabla. The WAH! band reformed in 2001 and toured in support of chant CDs Hidden In The Name and The Sound of Silence. This year brought the release of Opium, produced by Herb Graham, Jr. and supported by Macy Gray and Alanis Morissette band members. Opium introduced soulful English songs to WAH! audiences.

Wah! went on to produce Jai Jai Jai and Lokaha, weaving devotion with hip production and industry talent.

Wah! recently signed with Nettwerk Records. Her latest album called "Love Holding Love" was released in September of 2008. A Trendy chill production meets lyrics in Sanskrit and English... six Sanskrit chants and six love songs in English... Sade-like production. Also a published author, "Dedicating

Your Life to Spirit" is a new book from Wah! with over 150 photographs documenting yoga, lectures, meditation,

mudras, and chanting experiences. Taken directly from lectures, classes, teacher trainings and concerts in the US and abroad over the last five years, "Dedicating Your Life to Spirit" brings forth the wealth of Wah!'s teachings and experience. The book is presented in three sections -yoga, self-examination and chanting.

Magic, a broken wing and Davannayoga brought us a night of kirtan by Wah! a chance to experience in a different way the sense of community that we all love and know as Puerto Vallarta.

Marla Hoover, a practicing yogini for many years, is an international journalist and editor with over 300 published articles from Seattle, San Diego, to Puerto Vallarta and Guadalajara. For more information see www.vallartatribune.com.

There is a continual blood shortage here in the Banderas Bay area. Please consider participating in the upcoming Blood Drive scheduled for March 11, 2009 at Los Mangos Library between the hours of 8:30 am and 1 pm. Please see the donor requirements as listed here. And now, all donors, will receive a "Donor Card" which will, should the need arise, entitle you to one unit of blood for each unit you donate at no charge.

For questions, please contact Pamela Thompson at 044 322 107 7007 or pamela@healthcareresourcespv.com

Blood Donation Requirements in Puerto Vallarta

Please note: Requirements in Mexico are different than in the United States and Canada!!

This is directly from the Blood Bank Director. This list of donor requirements is not complete. Medical professionals will discuss and evaluate each donor's health history and activities in a confidential setting prior to blood donation. Donor eligibility criteria is



CARDIONEWS
BY JORGE CHAVEZ MD F.A.C.C.

What is a Cardiologist?

A cardiologist is a doctor with special training and skill in finding, treating and preventing diseases of the heart and blood vessels.

What is an F.A.C.C.?

An F.A.C.C. is a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology. Based on their outstanding credentials, achievements, and community contribution to cardiovascular medicine, physicians who are elected to fellowship can use F.A.C.C., Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, as a professional designation.

The strongest evidence of achievement for those who earn the

insignia comes from their peers.

Letters of sponsorship from other and medical school faculty attest to professional competence and commitment to excellence, and are necessary for election to Fellowship in the College.

When accepting election to Fellowship in ACC, each physician pledges, "cooperation and loyalty to the attainment of the ideals" of the College, the most important of which is to promote excellence in cardiovascular care.

Each year at ACC's Annual Scientific Session, newly appointed Fellows take part in the convocation ceremony honoring their new rank as F.A.C.C. and

reaffirming the commitment to furthering optimal cardiovascular care. New Fellows receive their certificate of Fellowship and are officially recognized at the convocation ceremony.

How are Cardiologists Trained?

Cardiologists receive extensive education, including four years of medical school and three years of training in general internal medicine. After this, a cardiologist spends three or more years in specialized training. That's ten or more years of training!

How Does a Cardiologist Become Certified?

In order to become certified, doctors who have completed a minimum of ten years of clinical and educational preparation must pass a rigorous two-day exam given by the American Board of Internal Medicine. This exam tests not only their knowledge and judgment, but also their ability to provide superior care. In México, there is also an equivalent Board not only in Internal Medicine, but in Cardiology and its sub-specialties as well, like the Board of Interventional Cardiology. Dr. Jorge Chavez is a Board Certified Interventional Cardiologist and Fellow of the American College of Cardiology in Puerto Vallarta. To learn more see www.vallartatribune.com

LIFE-SAVING BLOOD DRIVE MARCH 11

intended to protect the health and safety of the donor as well as the patient who will receive the transfusion.

Basic Requirements

Over 18 years old -maximum age 65 years old

Weight at least 50 kilos Good health (meaning donor feels

well and can perform normal activities and no chronic conditions)

No alcoholic beverages in the past 48 hours

Fasting for a minimum of 4 hours and no more than 8 hours.

Do not donate blood if:

Have AIDS or a positive HIV test, Hepatitis, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Papiloma, Chagas Disease, Herpes or engage in high risk sex.

Have any of the following conditions that can be signs-symptoms of HIV: Unexplained weight loss or night sweats, blue or purple spots in your mouth or on your skin, swollen lymph nodes for more than one month, white

spots or unusual sores in your mouth, cough that will not go away, diarrhea that will not go away, fever.

Other Disqualifiers:

Have used drugs, steroids, hormones.

Have had vaccines, antibiotics and some medications in the last month.

Have had sexual contact with more than three people in the last five years.

Are male who has had sexual contact with another male.

Have tattoos on your body. Note: Tattoos that you have had for 5 years or more are normally ok, regardless where they were received. But sometimes ones with color or that are extra large, are cause for exclusion.

Are pregnant or menstruating.

Once donated, the following exams are performed on the blood:

HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Brucella, Syphilis, VDRL, Chagas, Hematocrit, Hemoglobin, Rh Factor, Blood Type, Inverse and Direct group, Type and Cross match compatibility.