August 2021

Don’t call it a comeback!

Oh yeah, we’re finally getting back together, music in the parks, in the bars, in the spaces and places we have been exiled from, all this time.

It took me some head scratching to recall how to set up all the PA sound system for Shipwrecked! Music Fest, and I must admit, I was a bit concerned about how it was all going to go down. Well, we had about 300 people in that little park and the music from our local bands sounded as fantastic as ever! I loved seeing all my friends and strangers and all the little kids running around rocking out!

And we, the musicians and music fans of Anacortes, show no signs of slowing down. We’ve got a full schedule of music for August, at all the venues in town, leading up to AMP Fest on Sept 4th. That’s not an endpoint, that’s just the beginning; I predict a full slate of shows continuing on, at a pace to rival or exceed years past, this fall, winter, and beyond.

Stay right here; these are the good old days!

August Cover Artist

Jim McLachlan

Interview by Andrew Velin

Jim McLachlan is a 5th generation resident of Anacortes whose family’s presence pre-dates the existence of the town. “I grew up in a paradise of oceans and mountains and lakes, and through them eventually became my true vocation: I’m a beachcomber with a telescope on the shores of eternity. Painting feels like the little ten-year-old boy that is still loving the beauty that I absorbed and need to do something with it.”

He’s dabbled with painting most of his life, but only in the last few years has he been able to focus with consistent practice and discipline. “Artistic painting for me isn’t about talent, I believe what most people call talent is really just hard work and lots and lots of practice.” In terms of his influences, McLachlan mentioned Emily Carr from British Columbia. “I automatically identified with her work because I knew exactly what she was feeling. I’ve seen those same images in my soul when I’ve been in a virgin forest or on a native site, when the Northwest is being its most magnificent.” McLachlan’s paintings express a kind of sublime gratitude, a passionate gesture toward his beloved world. “Whether you’re an artist or not we all have a soulful connection to the reality around us. I’m just trying reflect that connection to beauty that was put into me by this place.”

McLachlan’s house is now filled with his landscapes, we just need to convince him to put on a show. Stay tuned! ■
by Mark Perschbacher and Joel Askey

After their grooving, rhythm powered set at the Shipwreck Music Fest, we asked Giovanni De La Rosa and Jerad Sommerville of Ebb, Slack and Flood what the toughest thing about the whole pandemic shutdown had been for the band. They both mentioned not having any shows with an appreciative audience to interact with. The July 17 event at Cauiseland Park hosted by Anacortes Music Project help crush that sense of isolation so many of us have been experiencing over the past year.

The park had a very palpable reunion atmosphere. Lots of people who hadn’t seen each other in a long time were hugging, shaking hands. The excitement was heightened by the return of the first live music festival in a very long time.

From noon until well after 9 pm, AMP’s epic showcase of local talent filled the summer time air with a wide variety of music and happy voices. It also gave the organization a chance to generate some funds for the many projects they have in the works. Through the sale of merchandise and baked goods, plus donations, AMP was able to generate an impressive $2,200 from the event. These funds, together with the AMP equipment savings fund, enabled the purchase a new PA sound system which will debut at AMP Fest in September!

By this time, the crowd had approximately doubled and the afternoon was gaining energy. Reptile Authority, all recent high school grads who came together as a band only two weeks before, impressed us with their tight energetic playing and crooning vocals. Two other young bands, Woohoo and Young Hunks, rocked the stage in the afternoon. Both tossed out a couple of great cover songs as well as offering up some notable originals. Woohoo’s “On Ice” started out slow then sped up to a good thrashing speed. Young Hunks’ “Grampire”, a song about a decidedly “not quite human” friend, bounced along with solid power pop feel. These young, energetic bands convinced us, yet again, that the music of Anacortes is always evolving and will never disappoint.

Karl Blau, visiting from Philly to record a new album at the Unknown, rallied his all-star recording band to carry their instruments across the street to play a set for his hometown fans. Their opening number, “Little Pink Maggot” was an excellent example of Karl’s unique country-influenced-modern-eclectic-folk sound. Ebb, Slack, and Flood got the audience moving with their cool, bluesy funk. Local favorites, The Enthusiasts, ran through a set of their nicely polished, rockin, folkly tunes.

The final band, Skagit County favorites, Fanny Alger, did what they are famous for—lighting a fire under the crowd. When the black and white suited five piece plugged in, things got crazy. Lead singer, Shane Gildnes launched into an inspired rant about hibernation, recreation, and vaccination that was truly something to behold. The evening ended with K Dug being pulled off the soundboard to sit in on guitar for the band’s stomping, hell-fire cover of “Kick out the Jams.” Whew, local music is back with a welcome vengeance. Keep watching Show Chime for more events to come.

Photos courtesy of Joel Askey.
Karl Blau and Scream Time

An Interview at the Unknown Studio, July 18, 2021

Photos and interview by Joel Askey

Karl Blau has been back in town this summer to record a new album at the Unknown. He has assembled a crack pot team of musicians, pretty much the same crew who recorded with him on his album Introducing. Show Chime’s Joel Askey talked with Karl to find out more.

Karl, what musical ideas are making it onto this new album?

Well, I feel like on this record I’m kind of swirling a bunch of ideas and past records all together into it. And yet, it’s a real focused thing, like we have a real focused sound now. The pedal steel is bringing this country element, you’ll hear it right off the top. I think that one of the first things you’ll hear — there’s pedal steel. And that’s Jon Hyde.

And the other thing you’ll hear is the sound of this 60’s Ace Tone keyboard, which is a predecessor to Roland, played by Aaron Otheim. […] The way he’s playing it is taking it in a new direction, even though it’s an old instrument. So we have the sound of the pedal steel and this African-sounding instrument.

Maybe a more modal or Eastern sound?

It kind of is. I think that part of my smell in the past has been kind of modal things that I get into. It’s sort of an Anacortes sound too — stacking major chords together that kind of shouldn’t belong but the melody all threads it all together.

So we’re doing a lot of that. I’m taking a lot of cues from D+ and a bunch of other projects I’ve worked on — maybe Earth even — and kind of swirling it all together on this record. But it’s real focused-sounding. Andrew Dorsett is playing drums on it — his feel is really keeping it all glued together. It’s got a country feel to it but yet I don’t think you’ll think of it as a country record necessarily.

And the subject matter — I’m kind of diving into the inside, and just the state of the Union basically. And my union and my union with the Union and the Union’s Union of Unions. And the onion of that Union. The onion that is the Union.

Maybe dealing with polarization and stuff like that?

Absolutely. The division of the Union is like a theme.

The treatment of polarization is not subtle, how do you deal with it?

Artfully and not in any real overt way. What I want to do is highlight the importance of vulnerability and open-mindedness.

Fallibility gives you humility and the ability to reach out to other people.

Right, right. You can connect through there. I think we need to emphasize on the connections. We’ve got those riffs figured out. We don’t have to put any more into it — it’s plain as day. We can work on the connections, for sure.

How do you think Philadelphia has imprinted itself on you, as far as your musical style or musical content?

I think musically there’s a really high bar there. Musicianship-wise, people are real monster musicians around there. It’s really exciting and a little intimidating.

When I play shows there, I feel like I have to be more on my toes, I’m not relaxed like I’m playing in front of my friends. At the same time, it’s not like New York, it’s a struggle to survive. People don’t have to have 3 jobs, they can get by with less work and still do their art. A lot of people have moved from New York to Philly, probably because of the pandemic. We had an influx of — like 150,000 people from New York to Philly? It’s crazy, like an unfathomable number.

I like the influence, it’s really exciting. The influence of the street culture, the way people dress and talk there is really invigorating.

So Alex is doing some of the engineering?

Yeah, Alex Heubel is helping out with some of the engineering, and Nich Wilbur did the first two days.

Will Nich be doing the mastering?

No, I’m going to do the mixing. Nich got us on our feet, and we’re taking off. I enjoy the production side of it and the mixing.

And so, you’re probably playing a lot of the instruments?

No, I’m just doing guitar. I’m trying not to play anything else. I’m trying to lean into my good, dear friends who are wonderful players. Steve Moore is coming on Monday to play some piano and trombone, and John Seibold will get to play some harmonica, and hopefully get Jacob Navarro on guitar if everything works out.

Any ideas on the themes for the album cover or name yet?

I’ve got a working title Scream Time. But it’s really a chill record and I think the juxtaposition of that was fun. An artist friend of mine, Randy Walker, has done a couple of covers to Scream Time already. I’ve been thinking about other titles too, we’ll see.

The wordplay matches a lot of other things you’ve done.

Yeah, and the idea for that is to just get people to look inside the cover a little bit and be always using your brain. If you see something that has a double meaning it just exercises your brain a little bit. I like to challenge the listeners and readers.

Anything else you’d like to add about timing or tours?

We don’t have any shows as a band set up. Back in Philly, I’ve got some shows. Bella Union is my label out of London. You just hope you send this record to the label, and they go “That’s great, we’ll put that out in such-and-such a time.”

I’m not making it with any kind of radio play in mind. I’m kind of doing a more artful record, because I’m feeling it. I hope you like it.
Ringing the Bell for Anacortes Music /// Brought to you by Anacortes Music Project

AMP is thrilled to announce the return of AMP Fest! This year’s festival takes place September 4th at Seafarers Memorial Park and will feature twenty local bands performing on two stages, beer and wine from Anacortes Brewery, and local food trucks. The entire day is family friendly, so bring a picnic and come listen to some great local music! This event is free and open to all ages and we encourage donations to help support Anacortes music! All donations go towards paying our performing artists and realizing our dream of a year-round, all-ages music venue in Anacortes. Come out, enjoy some local tunes, and be part of the dream!
Rock Returns to the Rock
by Will McCracken

Are we past the stage of celebrating the lovely lower half of our friend’s faces? Personally, I will never again take for granted that space north of the chin hairs and south of the lashes. And I will NEVER again take for granted live shows!

July 10th on the Slightly Salted shores of Guemes Island, we were treated to a daring performance by Up Up Up—The Crane Truck Circus, followed by an evening of marvelous tunes from Karl Blau, Jacob Navarro, and John Seibold. What a breath of fresh air it was! Amidst the chaos and existential terror of living in the USA (the Grey Area?) circa 2021, music, performance, and community arrived to heal our souls. These things are such powerful magical forces and we are so lucky to live among the most incredible local sorcerers, conjurers and witches. The only thing I could think on my ferry ride home was, “How did we live an entire year without this?!” and “When can I go to another show??”

I implore you to heal your own soul and go to every show you can from now till the day you drop. Bring your friends, tell them you love their face. Sing, dance, and soak up every beautiful note that enters your ears!

Live music has returned to Anacortes! Rejoice!

Photos courtesy of Will McCracken and Liam Poor.

More Anacortes Tunes from the Shut-down
by Todd Young

Tune in this month for Quaran-tunes II, the second installment of a two-part series focusing on music that has come to life during the pandemic. The NeXt Show’s DJ Todd will host this show with special guest Karl Blau. Tune in for some amazing tracks from Pearl Tottenham, Jacob Navarro, Karl Blau, Chris Aiken, B!son, and many more.

This Quaran-tunes edition will also include some haunting covers of songs by Geneviève Castrée, Anacortes’ dearly departed musician and friend, performed by her husband Phil Elverum (Mount Eerie), Black Belt Eagle Scout, and others.

The show will be available for listening on Thursday, August 1st at AnacortesMusicProject.org/podcasts where you will also find Quaran-tunes I. Go listen to both!
Verse Chorus Verse

Anyone who has ever gotten lost in the liner notes knows that reading the lyrics of a song can give you a whole new perspective on a band or musician. Here we highlight the words of one song. Each piece of writing featured here has a unique Anacortes connection. This month we have lyrics from AMP’s forthcoming release, Terribly Quiet, a collection of songs from women of Fidalgo Island that came out of this turbulent year. Elizabeth Baker Bishop tells us, in her own words, why she wrote this song.

“This song is about loss. The feeling of having lost someone dear to you, being angry about it, sad, and bewildered that the world just keeps going. It’s about wanting to grab and shake people as they go about their lives untouched and saying “Don’t you know what this world lost?” Michael lost his life saving another, and the randomness of it all - his life but not that one - was almost too much to bear. As the death tolls were rising I was feeling so much empathy to those losing loved ones without warning. I relived our loss and this song came out of the most raw part of my heart that hasn’t healed, but has for lack of a better description, learned to cope.

With this invitation to contribute, and Andrew’s help and his beautiful guitar playing, I had the courage to share it. Loss is loss. The title, Last Call, is the feeling we to which we can all relate - if we’d known... If we had just known, would it have been any different? I’m so grateful that our last call was about Walmart and Fainting Goats and laughing... so much laughing.

My hope is that Last Call not break hearts, but let people know that they are not alone. Their loss is felt and understood. To all broken hearts out there, you are seen and loved.”

Last Call
written by Elizabeth Baker Bishop
Bury in the garden all the dreams I should forget
Scrawl into the dirt all the secrets that I kept
Hidden parts of a broken heart stay quiet in my eye
But it’s tearing me apart, tearing me apart
I don’t want to be a hero, don’t want a reason to be brave
I have never felt so tired
In this pool of tears and fire can I lay it down, can I just lay down
All the clocks have stopped, my sense of time is gone
I’m the one who lives with this when everyone is gone
I still try to hear your voice, close my eyes - you’re never there
And it’s breaking my heart, breaking my heart
If I’d known your last call was your last, I’d have never said goodbye.
I’d have held the line a little longer
Said I love you so much stronger
Never let you go, Little did I know
Bury I the garden all the dreams I will forget
Scrawl into the dirt all the secrets that we kept
It’s breaking my heart, tearing me apart
Can I lay this down , Let me lay it down

Chime Chat with Cherry

In the tradition of the great personal advice column, Show Chime presents Chime Chat with Cherry. Do you have a problem you need help with? Are you wondering who you can turn to? Cherry doesn’t just dish out advice, she peers deeply into your soul to find the answers within you. She also specializes in naming bands, boats, and babies. Write to Cherry at theshowchime@gmail.com!

Dear Cherry:
I’m really excited to see some live music this summer but after more than a year of living in solitude, I’ve forgotten how to dance. I’ve also forgotten how to dress, act, make eye contact, and talk to people other than my cat. How can I avoid making a fool of myself? —Socially Awkward

Dear Awkward:
You are certainly not alone. Isolation has done a number on us all. I would urge you to start out slow and make eye contact with someone else’s cat. Then a dog. Then a goat. Nothing has crazier eyes than a goat, so if you can do that well you’ll be ready for people. As far as the dancing- it’s taken me 40 years to realize that no one knows how to dance. It’s all just wiggling about and making your body floppy. I realize this also describes seizures. Get help if that’s happening to you.

Dear Cherry:
Live music is happening and I can’t wait to get out and see a show! But I DO NOT want any of these friendly-germy people coming near me! How can I maintain my lovely six-foot bubble now that guidelines are loosening and people are throwing caution to the wind? —Don’t Hug Me

Dear Hug:
The time has come for the return of hoop skirts. You too can look like a cake topper! Plus, you could hide ANYTHING in there, like cats or several hams. No one is going to try and hug you if they can’t reach you. And it has been scientifically proven that germs can’t infect you if you look like a giant lampshade.

Dear Cherry:
Now that quarantine is (maybe) over, I want to find my true love. Does that exist and how can I find it? —One Is the Loneliest Number

Dear One:
Love is such a complex state, I can not give you a definitive answer. I believe it exists, and some people are lucky enough to give and receive it. Some people get derailed trying to find it. Let your heart be a beacon (title of my forthcoming self help book). In the meantime, listen to Daniel Johnston’s song True Love Will Find You In the End on repeat. ■
Town Talk  by Correspondent Nick

» The rich veterinarian from upriver who bought the San Juan Lanes bowling alley demolished the aging structure. It was painful to witness, and still no word on what is planned for the site.

» After nearly 10 years of business, Ciao Bella Italian restaurant has closed. In its place comes Marabella Restaurant and Pizzeria, from the same bloke who owned Bella Isola back in the day.

» A wild mural is going up on the house adjacent to and owned by the guy who owns Mad Hatter’s Ice Cream. Out of town artist Bryan Roman is responsible for the welcome creation.

Share the Local Music Love!

Call for Contributors
Show Chime is looking for volunteer contributors to help us cover the local music scene. Lend your skills and passion to help promote the homegrown music you love and help us grow this beloved publication. Cover one show or become a regular contributor. Have ideas about what we should cover? Contact us at THESHOWCHIME@GMAIL.COM to start the conversation.

Anacortes Music Channel
Do you know about the Anacortes Music Channel? One great pool of Anacortes music just churning away—24/7! Each sound recording played at Anacortes Music Project online radio has an Anacortes tie-in, a story that, if not rooted in Anacortes, is affected by or involves a person from our town. Tune in day and night at anacortesmusicproject.org.

Call for Band Bios
The AMP archive of Bands, Venues, Shows, Compilations, Events, and Players is just getting started! We are compiling photos, videos, and music, along with details of each artist/band. We need help from the community to build out this amazing resource. If you want to have your band included, just fill out our Archive Questionnaire!

Get in Touch!
Want your music projects or shows mentioned in the Show Chime? Want to submit a piece of art or an article? Have ideas for Show Chime you’d like to share? Show Chime only happens because of people like you. We would love to hear from you! THESHOWCHIME@GMAIL.COM

Represent!
Here at AMP we have big plans for the future. Your support amplifies the music and musicians of Anacortes. In addition to the promotion, publication, and distribution of the SHOW CHIME music calendar, AMP is committed to creating events that feature local musicians, developing a scholarship and mentoring program, continuing the development and collection of archives past and present, and shaping exciting visions for the future, such as a physical space for our community’s very own radio station and music space.

GO TO ANACORTESMUSICPROJECT.ORG AND CLICK ON THE SPONSORSHIP BUTTON.

Become an Amplifier!
Becoming a monthly donor is easy, you can scan this code with your phone and choose the amount you would like to contribute to AMP each month. Your donation helps us pay our musicians and artists, fund our events and festivals, offer AMP music camps, and move into an amazing new venue space for all to enjoy!

Stay in Anacortes
Coming to Anacortes for a show? Stay the night! Check out the range of options at Anacortes.org/stay

Thank You!
A huge thank you this month to our new monthly donors Jessica Redman, Brenda Treadwell, Jenn White, and Jensen Lovelett! Thank you to our sponsoring businesses; Mugsy at The Red Snapper, Hal, Sheryl, and Erik at The Brown Lantern, Nick and Carolyn at Bikespot, Mark and Willy at Guemes Island General Store, Rick Star at Rockfish Bar and Grill, Barrett Community Caring Project, and the good folks at the Anacortes Food Coop. Thank you Manieri board, Chris Terrell, and Keith Eyer at How It Works. Thank you, community member sponsors; Laura Spehar, Victoria McNeil, Patti Pattee, and Terry Velin. Thank you to Laurie Racicot for our editing and design. Extra special thank you to all of the fabulous musicians who played at Shipwrecked Fest and the people behind the scenes who made it happen. Thank you to everyone in the community who baked goodies for our bake sale. Thank you Doug Cassidy, Andrew Velin, and Andy Brown for hustling the stage and sound equipment for twelve hours. Thank you to Enduro for their generous sponsorship of the porta-potty. This August issue of Show Chime was printed by How it Works and made possible by a grant from the Anacortes Public Library Manieri Endowment. Getting the Show Chime to you each month is a community effort! This issue was written, edited, printed, distributed, and probably read on the traditional lands of Samish, Skagit, Swinomish, and Puget Sound Salish people.