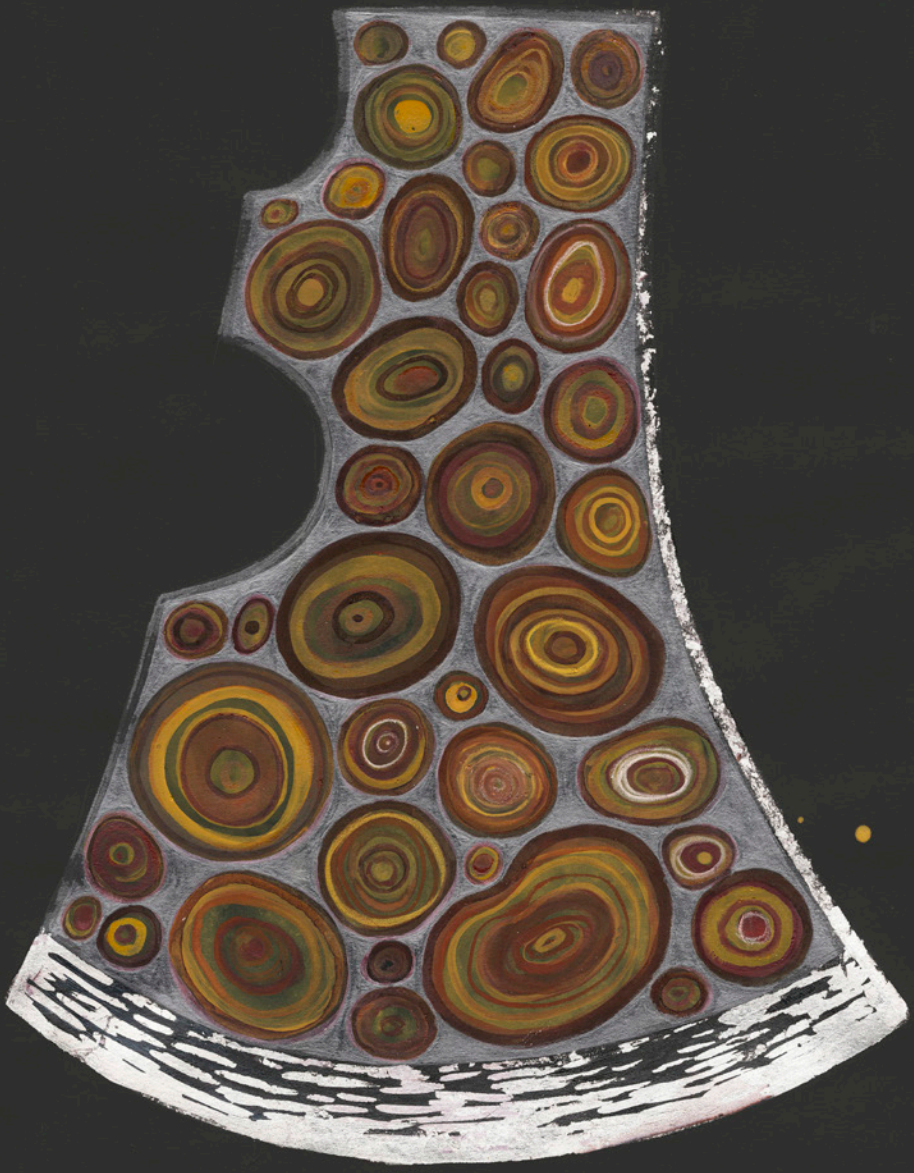
Show Chime

November 2026



Brought to you by Anacortes Music Project



Katie Williams
AMP Programs Manager

November 2026:

Since 2017, Anacortes Music Project has been building something special. What started as a motley crew with a shared love of music, has grown into a vibrant community of musicians, artists, mentors, volunteers, and families who believe in the power of music and connection.

As AMP continues to grow and become a more recognized organization within our community, so does our responsibility to the people we serve. We are proud of the work we're doing to strengthen our policies, expand our training and education, and continue learning how to be the best mentors, advocates, and community leaders we can be.

Growth comes with challenges, opportunities, and important conversations. With that spirit in mind, we're looking forward to inviting you to an upcoming AMP Community Night! We'll host a town hall style Q&A on Wednesday, November 11th, 5:30 PM at The Globe. We will share what's happening behind the scenes, talk about where we're headed, and most importantly, hear from our community stakeholders — you!

The Anacortes Music Project has become what it is today because people showed up, shared their talents, gave their time, and believed in what we could build together. Community isn't something that can be purchased, claimed, or controlled. It's something cultivated through years of dedication, collaboration, and a shared belief in something bigger than ourselves.

We're proud of how far we've come, committed to continuing to learn and improve, and excited about what's ahead.

Peace, Love and Slightly Salted,

Katie Williams

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Meet the Band:

Benny Sidelinger

by Ricky Vance, photo by Jason Haugland

When conversations turn to the artists helping shape the creative identity of Skagit Valley, Benny Sidelinger is a name that comes up often. A songwriter, performer, visual artist, and community builder, Benny has spent years weaving music, storytelling, and connection into the fabric of this valley. Whether he's performing on stage, collaborating with fellow artists, or helping create spaces where creativity can thrive, his work reflects a genuine commitment to the people and place that inspire it.

This winter, Benny brings that spirit to AMP's Annual Yule Bizarre, a celebration of local music, art, and community, during one of the year's most festive gatherings. I caught up with Benny to talk about creative evolution, staying rooted in community, and what audiences can expect when he takes the stage at Yule.

Ricky: What is a sound from your childhood that still lives in your music today?

Benny: My dad was an amazing music collector, concert goer, and aficionado. We had so many records and CDs in our house and were constantly listening. Around middle school, I started getting into all this great music from the 60s and 70s, particularly the grateful dead. My dad first took me to see the Dead when I was fifteen. The whole culture just blew my mind, a complete parallel universe to everything I'd known previously. Jerry Garcia was always such a huge influence, he's the main reason I picked up a guitar and influences can be found all through my music.

Ricky: Was there a moment when music stopped being something you loved and became something you needed?

Benny: I got suspended from school when I was about sixteen or seventeen, busted for smoking pot with some older kids before school. My parents grounded me during the time I was suspended and the only part of my life that could continue was playing guitar. I must have played like ten hours a day that week. Something really clicked, music was a crucial lifeline and distraction from getting in trouble, but also I realized I had an essentially endless appetite to learn and play. Soon after that my guitar teacher suggested to my mom that I had the potential to become a serious professional, which I overheard, and I was changed forever.

Ricky: Who were you trying to sound like before you figured out how to sound like yourself?

Benny: Jerry Garcia, Niel Young, Duane Allman, Dickey Betts, and Jimmy Hendrix were all people I copied a lot early on. At one point I transcribed many of the solos on the Allman brothers *Live at the Fillmore East*. Also Miles Davis was huge in that era for me. My guitar teacher was getting me into jazz and I listened to the album *Kind of Blue* over and over, transcribing many of Mile's solos to guitar. I spent so much time studying guitar in an academic way, private lessons in both jazz and classical in high school, then a full music degree in college. It wasn't really until after college that I found my own sound, heavily influenced by picking up the dobro and intentionally not taking any lessons, — with the hopes of inventing my own style.

Ricky: What part of the songwriting process still surprises you?

Benny: It's really just the days and moments when something flows and I get a big chunk of a song really quickly. A lot of my process is tedious tweaking, usually I have a song with an almost-complete melody and lyrics and spend a lot of time just reworking little bits that feel awkward, that's the normal pick and shovels work part that is the majority of time spent for me. But often that comes from a rare moment where I get a new idea and things just flow to an almost complete song, I never know when they're coming or how to get there, and of course trying to get there is a good way to ensure that it's not going to happen. It's always such a delightful surprise when I get into that flow state.

Ricky: Have you ever written a song that taught you something about yourself you weren't ready to know?

Benny: Yeah, I have an almost complete song I've been working on for a few months now. It was coming from a pretty pessimistic place, I was really overwhelmed by life, work, and family and had this line "it's a miracle". To me it was like a miracle that anyone can really get by right now, everyone is so taxed and overwhelmed. But my wife heard it as a really optimistic perspective, like every day is this amazing miracle. And I realized that my pessimism inherently has another side to it, and it could only exist with it's opposing optimism. So I started reworking that song to showcase both how hard life can be for everyone but how amazing it is and the people I know are.

Ricky: What are you paying attention to lately outside of music?

Benny: I have a lot of hobbies and interests and a big family. I spend a lot of time with my kids and wife, as well as outdoor sports like mountain biking and skiing. I've been doing quite a bit of trail building in our area and that's connected me to a new community and a great sense of accomplishment. I recently built a couple bridges that made sections of trails ridable, where you had to walk and carry your bike previously. Seeing texts from friends that hit those sections and enjoyed them has been very gratifying.

Ricky: Is there a place you return to, physically or mentally, when you need to reset?

Benny: The Mountains. I've always been drawn to mountains, and biking in remote areas and backcountry skiing are some of the biggest therapeutic outlets in my life. There's also specific places such as the Methow Valley that I go to often and get an immediate sense of relief in.

Ricky: Tell me about a fellow musician who deserves more attention than they're getting.

Benny: Oh man, there's so many!!! I've been pretty seriously involved in the music industry for over twenty years and I feel like we're at a peak in the level of quality and commitment we're seeing from people who aren't full time musicians. It's amazing how many people are putting out amazing albums these days, technology has enabled a lot of that but I think there's other factors too. People are realizing the healing power and making serious time (and money) commitments to their craft. But the space is crowded and everyone's attention is overtaxed by social media, so many are relatively unheard. I think Aida Miller is doing amazing things with her band Mild Mallard (and she's in my band and contributes so much). Mild Mallard is just getting going but I expect folks to start paying more attention to them soon. Really there's so many though, it's impossible to choose just one!

Ricky: What's the most valuable lesson you've learned from playing with other people?

Benny: Really just that often times the best contribution to an ensemble isn't the most flashy or virtuosic thing you can do. A simple, hooky lick that fits nicely in an empty spot is usually the thing that sounds best. Realizing this was very much a part of my professional career. I'd studied music so much and focused so much on what I "could" play, I had to learn later to focus on what I "should" play. I realized over time that I was getting the most work and appreciation by being more subtle, not trying to stand out or take the spotlight but trying to add subtle little details that listeners might not consciously pick out, but that were an integral part of the vibe or sound.

Ricky: Tell me about a show you'll remember for the rest of your life, and what about it made it so memorable?

Benny: Bear Square Festival in Concrete this past summer. Our buddy Miguel was one of the main organizers and we knew it was all an experiment. But a bunch of friends were playing and we knew the bands would all be there for each other. Somehow we got put last on Saturday night, right after the Enthusiasts, who are so high energy. I was really nervous about two things: first that everyone would be tired and leave before our set, it was late and most folks had been there for over five hours. Second was that we'd be so low energy after the Enthusiasts. I was somewhat right about my first fear, the crowd had naturally kinda dwindled after a really long day of music. But the people who stayed were mostly the other bands, all of whom are friends of ours. We had maybe 30 people in this little room and the vibe was just so amazing. We were all so in the pocket and we packed in 45 minutes of our highest

Continued on page 5 →

energy material, even slower tempo songs somehow became danceable, and everyone there was 100% with us. We played the best we'd ever played that night and we were connecting with every single member of the audience. It was an amazing feeling. I've played at festivals for many thousands of people before, but that night playing for just 30 or so people will forever live in my mind as one of the highlights.

Ricky: Your latest album, *Cherry Street,* is coming up on its two-year anniversary. What do you remember most about that recording process, and what does that album still mean to you?

Benny: That process was so formative for me. It was my first solo album and I was in the early stages of finding a sound. It was my first time recording with many of my current band members. I think we just touched upon some elements that came to define what is now "Benny Sidelinger and the Fits". I'm really excited about the next album, which is in the works, as a more realized version of the sound we've developed together, but *Cherry Street* was such a crucial step in finding that and building out the space to develop further.

Ricky: What would you like to leave ringing in the room after the last note fades?

Benny: I think for me the big thing is I want people to feel seen, understood, and to not feel like they're the only ones with issues. My ideal gift is a sense of catharsis where folks can take a moment to realize that everyone else has problems too, especially the guy pouring out his secrets on stage. There's so much of everyone showing a curated facade of their lives on social media these days and that tends to make us feel like everyone's lives are better than ours. I want my shows to be the exact opposite of that.

Ricky: After the upcoming Yule Bizarre you have a show at the Arcadian in January, aside from that what's next on the agenda for you?

Benny: I'm working on a co-bill with Nathaniel Talbot in March, and I have a fun songwriters in the round show on Guemes island with Sommer Carter and Chad Henry, right before the Arcadian. ■

You can catch Benny Sidelinger and the Fits live at Rockin' Yule Bizarre on Saturday, December 19.

From November Cover Artist

Ora Mae Petersen

Hi, I'm Ora Mae Petersen.

November's cover art is called 'Ax Reflecting Wood Pile.'

This ax reflects the resource it helped to harvest. The piece began simply because I like the ancient shape of the ax head and the shine of the material, whether stone or steel. And I have a thing for wood piles — the aesthetics of joined circles and the symbolism of a life-giving resource. That links to my fascination with cellular structures, the connection of which can create a whole body. We as humans link together in this way to create a community of mutual support. Then, if we can meet our practical needs, we may have enough resources to invest energy into making art and music, i.e. culture. My own civic commitments* center on supporting culture and conserving nature, both of which make us all healthier and happier.

I was raised here in Anacortes by an artistic mother in an art loving community. My artistic streak came through from both sides of my family and I lived among poets, painters, sculptors and musicians. So I claim no unique creative powers. It's an inheritance which I have carried and tried to manifest in my own peculiar way. Now, in my fifth decade of life, I believe that being an 'Artist' comes down to actively claiming the time and space required to actually make the art. I have an endless supply of inspiration, given my decades of learning and the beauty of my environment. Yet my ideas can't manifest if I don't put some good music on in my studio and get to work.

*Shout out to the Anacortes Arts Festival and the Deception Pass Park Foundation! I am on the boards of both because I respect and admire the work they're doing and want to support their missions. ■

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 or poem with a unique Anacortes connection. This month we have original lyrics from Anacortes singer-songwriter, Adam SoRelle, who recently released this track from his upcoming album, *Sketching Shade*.

"My partner was smiling as we rode the ferry across from Anacortes to Friday Harbor in late Autumn, in and out of a fog so deep it was impossible to see. She kissed me and told me that's why the locals call it Fogtober. Thanks again, my beautiful muse."

Fogtober

by Adam SoRelle

Seems like Friday is here.
Fogtober. The ferry is near.
A new life, drowning in love!
Searching for pieces, tangible of.

The howl in the night is a baying dog

Madrone, the tree of the sea.
Red and twisted, stubborn like me.
She seeds life, a drop in the sound.
Oh she's shattered and split and surrounded in fog.

The sound in the hills is a shrieking owl

Green lights, autumn appears.
The sun is bombarding the atmosphere.
Dream like, fox in the myst.
Where colors and cultures and WE coexist.

The lighthouse shines on a breaching pod.

Manieri Jazz Events

November 2026

Sponsored by the Manieri Endowment. Free and all welcome!

Second Sunday Jazz

Christian Casolary's Resonance Quartet

Sunday, November 8, 2:00 PM

Resonance Quartet is a brand-new collective of master musicians with a unique chemistry and group sound. The ensemble performs a blend of jazz standards and original compositions from everyone in the collective. Beauty, intensity, lullaby, and subconscious dark matter — Resonance Quartet will take you on a journey inward that won't disappoint.

At the Anacortes Public Library

All Ages Jazz Jam

Sunday, November 8, 6:00 PM

Join us on the Second Sunday of the month at The Globe for an all ages, all abilities Anacortes Jazz Jam! All are welcome. Bring something to play if you want or just show up to learn something new. For those bringing sheet music, please bring three copies for the rhythm section.

At The Globe (formerly Buxton's)

Manieri Jazz Lecture Series

Miles Davis at 100

Thursday, November 19, 2:00 PM

Join us for an entertaining and illuminating afternoon celebrating the centennial year of the enduring legacy of jazz icon Miles Davis. Led by Brent Jensen, we will explore his extraordinary life, groundbreaking music, and lasting influence on the evolution of jazz.

At the Anacortes Public Library

NOVEMBER 2026 Live Music Calendar

Ringing the Bell for Anacortes Music /// Brought to you by Anacortes Music Project

Tuesday, November 3

5:00 PM
Dad's Diner
Ben Starner
Local Pianist All Ages

Wednesday, November 4

1:00 PM
Anacortes Senior Center
Kay Blanchette Garza, Jamie Findlay
Guitar and Vocals All Ages

6:00 PM
Rockfish Grill, Anacortes
Whistle Lake Jazz Quartet
Ballads & Blues All Ages

6:00 PM
AMP Radio
That Reminds Me Of...
Live Radio Show All Ages
anacortesmusicproject.org/radio

7:00 PM
The Globe*
Earlimart
Post-Punk All Ages

Thursday, November 5

5:30 PM
Guemes Island General Store
7:20 String Band
Bluegrass All Ages

8:00 PM
The Globe*
Open Mic
Local Talent All Ages

Friday, November 6

8:00 PM
Arcadian Public House
The Enthusiasts, Kyle's Cosmic Country Band
Honky Tonk All Ages

Saturday, November 7

6:00 PM
Bastion Brewery
Casaundra May & James
Roots Blues All Ages

7:30 PM
Rockfish Grill
Joe Whitney, Streetlive Family
Soul Rock All Ages

8:00 PM
Arcadian Public House
Under the Puddle, Stage Hogs
Country Grunge All Ages

Sunday, November 8

2:00 PM
Anacortes Public Library
Manieri Second Sunday Jazz
Christian Casolary's Resonance Quartet
Resonant Jazz All Ages

6:00 PM
The Globe*
Manieri All Ages Jazz Jam
All Welcome All Ages

Tuesday, November 10

5:00 PM
Dad's Diner
Ben Starner
Local Pianist All Ages

Wednesday, November 11

5:30 PM
The Globe*
AMP Community Meet-Up
Q&A All Ages

6:00 PM
Rockfish Grill
To and From
Honky Tonk All Ages

6:00 PM
AMP Radio
That Reminds Me Of...
Live Radio Show All Ages
anacortesmusicproject.org/radio

Thursday, November 12

5:30 PM
Guemes Island General Store
7:20 String Band
Bluegrass All Ages

8:00 PM
The Globe*
Open Mic
Don't Be Shy All Ages

Friday, November 13

6:30 PM
The Globe*
Dull Cosmos, Seraphic, Dead Julia, Cloud Corporation
Costume Concert! All Ages

8:00 PM
Arcadian Public House
Levi Ware, City of Pines
Worldly Soul All Ages

Saturday, November 14

7:30 PM
Rockfish Grill
Mark Dufresne
Blues Harmonica All Ages

8:00 PM
Arcadian Public House
Hernamewasprincess, Sommer Carter, We Were Heros
Local Originals All Ages

Sunday, November 15

The Globe*
Wynne Greenwood, Your Heart Breaks, Coley Mixan
Record Release Show All Ages

Tuesday, November 17

5:00 PM
Dad's Diner
Ben Starner
Local Pianist All Ages

Wednesday, November 18

6:00 PM
Rockfish Grill
Andre Feriante
Fusion Guitar All Ages

Thursday, November 19

2:00 PM
Anacortes Public Library
Manieri Jazz Lecture Series
Miles Davis at 100
With Brent Jensen All Ages

5:30 PM
Guemes Island General Store
7:20 String Band
Bluegrass All Ages

8:00 PM
The Globe*
Open Mic
Local Talent All Ages

Friday, November 20

6:00 PM
The Globe*
Anacortes Early Music
The Classical Voice
Soprano and Strings All Ages

8:00 PM
Arcadian Public House
Jammin' After Noon
Classic Rock All Ages

Saturday, November 21

7:30 PM
Rockfish Grill
Red House
Blues & Soul All Ages

Tuesday, November 24

5:00 PM
Dad's Diner
Ben Starner
Local Pianist All Ages

Wednesday, November 25

6:00 PM
Rockfish Grill
Fidalgo Swing
Gypsy Jazz All Ages

6:00 PM
AMP Radio
That Reminds Me Of...
Live Radio Show All Ages
anacortesmusicproject.org/radio

Friday, November 27

11:00 AM
The Business
Black Friday Record Store Day
Support Local All Ages

Saturday, November 28

6:00 PM
Rockfish Grill
Bizozzo Shaft
Groove Jams All Ages

***The venue formerly known as Buxton's, 1904 Commercial Ave**

But wait, there's more!

For the full calendar of local music events in the Anacortes area, please see: anacortesmusicproject.org/calendar

Did we miss your event?

We strive to publish all Anacortes music shows! Send information about your event to **theshowchime@gmail.com** by the 24th of each month.

Happening at The Globe!

AMP Space
Fall Open Hours!

Thursdays 2:30 - 7:00 pm
Fridays 2:30 - 8:00 pm

Join us in the AMP Space for practice spaces, instrument lending library, impromptu jam sessions, new friendships, and general good times. All ages welcome!

The Globe (formerly known as Buxton's)
1904 Commercial Ave
info@anacortesmusicproject.org
www.anacortesmusicproject.org

**Early closure Friday, November 20th, 6:00 pm for Anacortes Early Music concert.

AMP Community Meet-Up

Join us for food and drink and a town-hall-style Q & A. Get involved! We want to tell you what we've been up to, what to look forward to in the new year, and hear about what you would like to see AMP do in our community.

Wednesday, November 11, 5:30 pm

Manieri Jazz Jam

Join a professional backing jazz band on stage in a round robin fashion. All ages, all abilities welcome. Bring your song to play, or come to watch!

Second Sundays, 6:00-8:00 pm
Next Session November 8

Community Open Mic

For nearly 30 years, our friends and supporters at the Brown Lantern have given Anacortes a weekly space to share music. Now open mic night has a new home at The Globe. Come hang out and help us carry the torch every Thursday night. All Ages. Bar for 21+.

Every Thursday, 8:00-10:00 pm

AMP Radio

anacortesmusicproject.org/tune-in

That Reminds Me Of...

A weekly radio show hosted by Liz and Spencer Duffy, featuring Pacific Northwest music, musicians, and more.

Every Wednesday, 6:00-8:00 pm

Please visit our website to register for programs and purchase tickets for events!

November Events

Earlimart

On tour from California, this experimental, post-punk, indie band is not to be missed. New album coming out in 2027. Tickets at undertowshows.com.

Wednesday, November 4, 7:00 pm

Costume Concert!

Dull Cosmos, Seraphic, Dead Julia, and Cloud Corporation. Dressing up in costume encouraged! $10 cover, 18 and under free.

Friday, November 13, 6:30 pm

Wynne Greenwood Record Release Show

Celebrate the release of a new record by artist and musician, Wynne Greenwood, with Your Heart Breaks, Coley Mixan. Featuring art by Matt Offenbarcher. All ages, $10-20 cover, 18 and under free.

Sunday, November 15, 2:00 pm

Anacortes Early Music: The Classical Voice

Featureing the vocal works of Franz Schubert arranged for string quartet alongside the string quartets of Maddalena Lombardini, one of the first women to write string quartets.

Friday, November 20, 6:00 pm

Comedy Night with Sean Jordan

Sean's stand-up comedy has been described as "You get the sense this is sincerity, not shtick. His buoyancy can be hard to crack." More importantly, his young daughter lauded Sean's ability to "be tall" and "carry me upside down so I can walk on the ceiling." Tickets available on Eventbrite.

Saturday, November 21, 7:30 pm 18+









Piano Starts Here in Anacortes

Review and photos by Clarity Miller

A glorious night was had by literally 100% of the audience at AMP's first Piano Starts Here night, which featured the music of Elliott Smith.

Tickets to the October 17th show sold out, and attendees were treated to a curated, cozy atmosphere reminiscent of a jazz bar. Pianists Kathy Moore, Tim Mechling, Alex Guilbert, and Ben Starner performed interpretations of classic Elliott Smith songs like "Miss Misery" and "Twilight". Moore was accompanied by Sommer Carter singing an incredible "Between the Bars," and Mechling's performance of "Say Yes" had many people in tears.

Piano Starts Here is a recurring concert series that started in Seattle, hosted and curated by pianist Alex Guilbert, alongside recurring co-hosts and contributors like Tim Kennedy and Wayne Horvitz.

The AMP series will continue quarterly, with the music of Led Zeppelin featured next. ■

Fidalgo Makers Guild

Now offering classes at The Globe! Visit their website for more information: fidalgomakersguild.com

Pin Loom Weaving
Tuesday, November 3, 5:30 pm

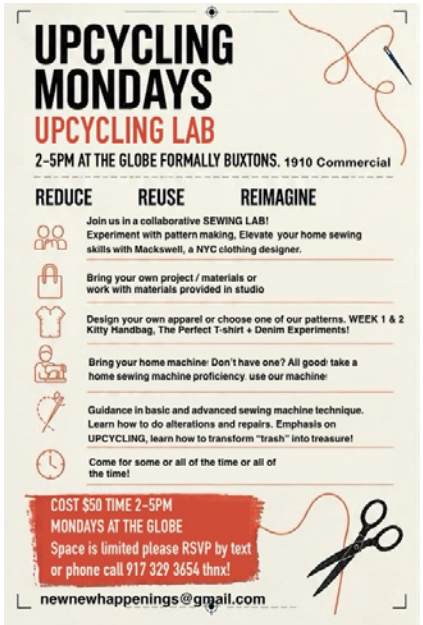
Seasonal Wreath Making
Friday, November 6, 10:00 am

Solid Perfume
Tuesday, November 10, 5:30 pm

Make Your Own Stamp
Saturday, November 14, 10:00 am

Mix & Scent a Cleaning Kit
Tuesday, November 17, 5:30 pm

Textile Printing Market Bag
Sunday, November 22, 2:00 pm





Dave Matthies on guitar at The Business. Photo courtesy of Anacortes Museum.

Anacortes and Its Freakishly Fervent Scene

The Gift Machine's Dave Matthies on Recording and Touring with Local Collaborators

I lived in Anacortes, WA from 1998-2006 but I roots have going back a few generations and I still feel a deep connection there today. My band The Gift Machine was formed there in 1999. I put on shows for local and touring bands like Little Wings, The Graves and Bonnie Prince Billy at Magic City and The Business. I had a recording studio at the Department of Safety, and also helped Bret Lunsford run KNW-YR-OWN records and What the Heck Fest during my time in town. I have always described the scene as freakishly fervent.

It's a beautiful study on the power of DIY culture. A town of less than 20,000 people with only a handful of bands with disparate styles was receiving national attention almost on par with our big sister cities of Vancouver, Seattle and Portland. It was a "scene" simply because we said it was. I always thought the secret to its success was that it was a collaborative versus competitive in nature. Friends would play in each other bands and learn each other songs. At one What the Heck Fest I think I remember playing in 10 different bands!

Maybe even more importantly, the unsung hero of Anacortes is the actively attentive (and attending) audiences which allowed these events to happen. If a touring band came through on a Tuesday, you could set up a show for them and know that at least 20-25 adults and high school kids would show up, even if they had never heard of the band. [...]

I was a third generation Anacortesian. My great uncle Richard Matthies was first to move there in the 1950's when he married Pattie McCracken and got a job at the McCracken family-owned Curtis Wharf. Richard and Pattie were national award-winning dahlia breeders and the word "Fidalgo" prefaced all of the dahlias they created. Fidalgo Knight and Fidalgo Blacky are still popular today.

In 1961 my grandfather, David Matthies, sold his 128-acre dairy farm in Edison and moved to Anacortes to become a shareholder at Anacortes Veneer, Inc. the unique employee-owned plywood plant. My dad, Doug, graduated from Anacortes High School in 1963. My grandfather was also a volunteer firefighter and spent a lot of time in the fire station that would eventually house the Department of Safety - where I would later live and have a recording studio.

My grandmother, Hortense Matthies, who everyone called Toots, was a piano player in several bands in the 1940s in Seattle, the only other musician on both sides of my family. Anacortes was the first city in Skagit County to get MTV, so when we would make our weekly visit as kids in the 1980s, she would watch MTV with us. Though she hated most of the music, which was deservedly crap, she liked Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train", giving my brother Darrin and I the bragging rights that our grandma in Anacortes liked "Ozzy".

I grew up in Mount Vernon and started writing songs/forming bands when I was in middle school when I was 13 or 14.

My first Anacortes musical experience was when my high school band, Yukon Stove, played at the New Bohemian coffee shop in downtown Anacortes in 1993. I think we played "unplugged". I remember the distinct warm feeling of the audience and that the crowd "got it", which wasn't always the case for a lo-fi pop band in the heart of the big beat grunge era. We would often make pilgrimages to the Business, a local record and bookshop, to look for records and ask Bret Lunsford questions about the "music business" and where our band should record.

My friend Karl Blau was really the impetus to get me to move to Anacortes. Karl and I met in high school. My band then, Understanding Blue, and his band, Yellow #5, had a rivalry because 1) we were from Mount Vernon and they were from Burlington and 2) our drummer Coady Willis and Karl's guitar player Rob Avila were dating the same girl (from Sedro Woolley). Coady went on to later fame with the Murder City Devils, the Melvins, and Big Business. Despite this initial hurdle, Karl and I's later high school bands played shows together (Yukon Stove, Captain Fathom) and we became friends.

In 1993 Karl and I became roommates in college in Bellingham. We both learned the art of recording at the Fairhaven College recording studio and made a lot of music together. I lost touch with Karl for a few years when I moved to Olympia to attend The Evergreen State College, but in 1997 we reconnected when Karl was down in Olympia recording at YoYo studios. He was excited to share with me that he had also joined a band called D+, with Bret Lunsford, that was putting stuff out on K records.

I started making trips up to Anacortes to visit him in a tree house he had built on a property on Havekost Road, just out of town. My band at the time, Tresspassers W, and his band Captain Fathom would also play shows together at the Rexville Grange or Hillcrest Park Lodge in Mount Vernon. After finishing college at Evergreen in 1998 I decided to move to Anacortes and got a house on 7th St. near the Guemes Ferry Terminal with Bill Cook, who played in Captain Fathom with Karl.

On a whim, I brought an application to the Business, a record store, bookstore, camera shop, coffee shop venue owned by Bret Lunsford and the cultural hub of Anacortes. To my serious surprise, Bret hired me! Dream job! Right away Bret gave me the key to the small but famed recording studio in the back of the store and I started helping him with KNW-YR-OWN, a small record label Bret had started in the 1980's to mainly put out compilations of local bands. Phil Elverum had revitalized the label in the mid 1990s, putting out release by the Microphones, Pirhanas, Brownyn, Khaela Maricich, Dennis Driscoll and James Moffit, before he moved to Olympia and became a part of K Records. It was an honor to be part of this and I began releasing music on KNW-YR-OWN first as The Serendipitous Mayors of Brightness and eventually as The Gift Machine.

In 1999, shortly after starting at the Business I went on my first tour out of state with Phil Elverum, Karl Blau, Nate Ashley in 1969 Chevy Bel Air I acquired. The trunk was big enough to fit all of our gear! We toured as 4 different bands, The Microphones, Karl Blau, Nate Ashley and The Gift Machine, but it was just the 4 of us, switching instruments for the different incarnations. This was a business model we would adopt a lot later on. It was a little confusing for the audience when it came time to buy merchandise, but "When that person is singing it's that band" was our oft answer . We played around 14 shows in two weeks in the western states of Oregon, California, Nevada, Utah and Idaho. Phil's success as The Microphones, and naming his later project Mount Eerie after local landmark Mount Erie and mentioning Anacortes in every early interview was many people's introduction to the town.

Not long after Bill and I got the 7th street house, Karl was living in the basement and our friend Nate Ashley moved into a room in the unattached garage in back of the house. This was an incredible creative time and we all made a lot of music together, both recorded and live. With all four of us being songwriters, we would often be each other's bands, adopting the 4 people 4 bands approach, with my brother Darrin often sitting in as well. We mostly put on shows at dance recital room named Magic City on the back side the buildings at 5th St. and Commercial Ave. It was incredibly echoey, but worked really nice for acoustic, vocal based music. [...]

I still consider Anacortes my musical home, and thankfully, despite my long absence from everyday life there, it still accepts me back as a virtual resident. I'm still plotting my way back to town... ■

Originally published August 17, 2025, this article is an exerpt from an Anacortes Music History Substack curated by the Anacortes Museum, as part of the ongoing Music of Anacortes history exhibit. You can find the full article, which is not to be missed, on the Substack page: anacortesmusic.substack.com/

New Releases



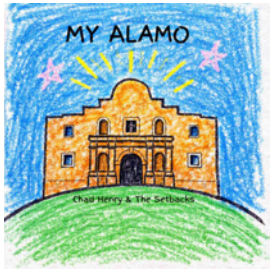
from Adam SoRelle:

"Fogtober"

A single from my upcoming 2027 album *Sketching Shade,* "Fogtober" is an original Seattle rock song about my love of the beautiful San Juan islands.

Released October 30, 2026

Written, recorded, produced, mixed, and mastered by Adam SoRelle.



from Chad Henry & the Setbacks:

"My Alamo"

My Alamo is a reimagined wedding vow. Anchored by the central metaphor of standing ground like Davy Crockett at the Alamo, the song captures a resolute promise to love, hold, and support a partner until the very end.

Released October 30, 2026

Chad Henry on guitar and vocals, Jim Reeder on bass and background vocals, Chris Marin on drums, and Robert Irving on piano and organ.

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