

PORTLAND MUSIC INSIDER

PMI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #1 • VOLUME #1 • SEPTEMBER 2026

INSIDE THE SOUND OF THE NORTHWEST

Portland music. Portland artists. Portland stories.





WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE PMI NEWSLETTER

A New Home for Portland's Music Stories

Welcome to **Portland Insider Music**
— **PMI Newsletter**, a publication



created for people who believe
Portland's music history and story is

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worth remembering, celebrating, and
continuing.

At PMI Newsletter, **we are
passionate about showcasing the
best of Portland's music scene.** We
love connecting our readers with
emerging local artists while also
recognizing the musicians,
performers, producers, venues, and
music-industry professionals who
have spent years helping build the
sound of the Northwest.

Our mission is not simply to tell you
what is happening tonight.

We want to tell you **why it matters.**

Portland's music culture is made up of
thousands of individual stories. Some
happen on large stages. Others happen
in small clubs, neighborhood bars,
rehearsal spaces, recording studios,
record stores, living rooms, and back
rooms where musicians spend years
developing their history and craft.

Some artists become household
names.

Others become the musician your
friends tell you about twenty years
later.

**PMI Newsletter wants to tell both
stories.**

WHY PMI NEWSLETTER EXISTS

We believe Portland's music community deserves a publication that takes time to listen.

Our conversations with long-standing 20 year plus musicians are designed to go beyond the usual promotional interview. We want to hear about the first band, the first stage, the first recording, the difficult years, the great shows, the people who helped along the way, and the moments when an artist realized that music had become more than a hobby.

Our PMI interview format specifically explores subjects such as memorable Portland performances, influential local musicians and producers,

changes in touring, technological changes in recording, the transition from physical media to streaming, the importance of live performance, and the legacy artists hope to leave in Portland.

That is the philosophy behind this newsletter.

PMI Newsletter is here to listen.

PMI Newsletter is here to document.

PMI Newsletter is here to celebrate Portland music.

And most importantly:

PMI Newsletter is here for the people who make history and music.

PMI NEWSLETTER

Inside this issue:

- Montavilla Jazz — A Neighborhood Becomes a Stage
- Easyfolk Fest — Seven Local Acts, Two Nights
- Portland's Changing Concert Landscape
- The Record Store Still Matters
- The PMI September Listening Guide
- The PMI Artist Connection
- What We Believe About Portland Music

FEATURE HISTORY AND STORIES

MONTAVILLA JAZZ: WHEN A NEIGHBORHOOD BECOMES A STAGE



There is something uniquely Portland about hearing local music in a neighborhood.

Not just **at** a venue.

In the neighborhood.

The 2026 Montavilla Jazz Festival took place September 4–6, bringing local artists and special guests into venues and outdoor spaces throughout Montavilla. The festival describes itself as Portland's only all-original jazz festival, emphasizing music written and performed by Portland artists.

The festival's 2026 locations included Alberta Rose Theatre, Portland Metro Arts, Montavilla Plaza, Mt. Tabor's Caldera Amphitheater, and Show Bar, along with additional no-cover programming at Jazz Village partner locations.

That variety is important.

A music festival does not necessarily have to feel like a giant event dropped into a city.

Montavilla Jazz demonstrates another approach: **follow the music through the local neighborhood.**

Walk a few blocks.

Find another room.

Hear another artist.

Stop for something to eat.

Meet someone who came to hear the same musician you did.

Then do it all over again.

THE POWER OF A LOCAL MUSIC COMMUNITY

At PMI, this is one of the things we value most.

Music creates relationships.

A young musician sees an experienced performer.

A songwriter meets a producer.

A fan becomes a supporter.

A venue owner discovers an artist.

A musician who has been performing for decades meets someone who is just beginning.

Those connections are difficult to measure, but they are part of what keeps a music city alive.

Montavilla Jazz's own mission emphasizes local artists, community, and creating opportunities for audiences to encounter new music.

That philosophy fits naturally with PMI Newsletter.

We want to know who is playing.

But we also want to know:

Who are they?

Where did they come from?

Who influenced them?

What keeps them creating?

What do they want the next generation to know?

Those are the questions that create a music history and story.

PMI LISTENING NOTE

Don't just attend a show. Become part of the scene.

Follow the artist.

Buy the record.

Tell a friend.

Come back the next time.

A thriving music community is built one listener at a time.

PHOTO CAPTION:

Montavilla Jazz 2026 brought original Portland jazz to multiple neighborhood venues and public spaces, reinforcing the connection between music and community.

PMI SPOTLIGHT

EASYFOLK FEST: PORTLAND'S LOCAL SOUND TAKES CENTER STAGE





Portland's independent music community gets another major spotlight this month with **Easyfolk Fest 2026**, taking place September 18–19 at the Dolores Winningstad Theatre.

The festival calls itself Portland's only all-local folk music festival and describes the event as a celebration of the city's independent music community.

This year represents a significant step for the Portland festival.

Easyfolk Fest has moved downtown Portland to the historic Winningstad Theatre and has become a recognized **501(c)(3) nonprofit organization**.

And the lineup is entirely local.



FRIDAY NIGHT

Friday night's showcase begins at 7 p.m.

Rebecca McDade

Liney Blu

Jason Lenyer Buchanan

Three artists.

Three different approaches.

One Portland stage.

The official festival schedule lists Rebecca McDade at 7 p.m., Liney Blu at 8 p.m., and Jason Lenyer Buchanan at 9 p.m.

SATURDAY NIGHT

Saturday expands the showcase to four performances:

Mitch Whitaker

Essie & The Hum

Kenzy Peach

Idea the Artist

The Saturday program begins at 6 p.m. and continues through the evening.

That gives Easyfolk Fest seven performances across two nights.

And that is precisely what interests us at PMI.

WHY ALL-LOCAL MATTERS

There is a tendency to think of a successful music festival as one that attracts the biggest possible touring names.

But there is another kind of success.

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A festival can be successful because it gives local musicians a professional stage.

It can be successful because it introduces an audience to an artist they have never heard before.

It can be successful because a musician sells merchandise, meets a new fan, makes a new connection, or gets invited to another stage.

Easyfolk's move downtown and its nonprofit structure represent a new chapter for the organization, according to founder Joe Sanchez and the festival's own announcement.

For PMI Newsletter, this is exactly the kind of development worth following.

Because Portland music is not simply something that happens here.

**Portland music is something
Portland musicians build.**

PMI EVENT NOTE

Easyfolk Fest 2026

September 18–19, 2026

Dolores Winningstad Theatre

1111 SW Broadway, Portland

Friday: Doors 6 p.m. • Music 7 p.m.

Saturday: Doors 5 p.m. • Music 6 p.m.

All ages. General admission seating.



SCENE WATCH

PORTLAND'S CONCERT LANDSCAPE IS CHANGING





Every music city needs places for artists to play.

But not every artist needs the same size stage.

A new chapter is developing in Portland's live-music infrastructure with **Steelhead**, a planned 3,500-capacity live entertainment venue in the Central Eastside.

Live Nation says Steelhead is targeting a summer 2027 opening. The project is being developed by Portland-based Beam Development and Colas Development Group in partnership with Live Nation.

A venue of that size can become an important part of the touring ecosystem.

But PMI Newsletter believes the conversation has to go beyond capacity.

THE MUSIC ECOSYSTEM IS A LADDER

Think about a musician beginning a career in Portland.

The first performance might be in a tiny room.

Then another.

Then a neighborhood showcase.

Eventually, perhaps, a 500-person room.

Then a larger theater.

Then a festival.

Then, if the opportunity develops, a major concert venue.

That progression matters.

A healthy music community needs places at every level.

The biggest venue in town cannot replace the smallest one.

And the smallest room cannot serve every audience.

They are all connected.

THE ROOMS WHERE MUSIC HAPPENS

For PMI, the most interesting question is not whether Portland will have another large concert venue.

The interesting questions are:

How will artists move between rooms?

How will local promoters use new spaces?

Will emerging artists have opportunities to open larger shows?

What happens to the local neighborhood clubs?

How can Portland preserve the intimate rooms where musicians develop?

These are questions that will become increasingly important as Portland's concert landscape evolves.

Steelhead is currently planned for summer 2027, so there is still time for the community to watch the project develop and understand how it fits into the larger Portland music ecosystem.

PMI FIELD NOTE

A music city is not defined by its biggest stage.

It is defined by the network of stages that allow musicians and audiences to keep finding one another.

The small club matters.

The rehearsal room matters.

The theater matters.

The festival matters.

And yes — the large concert hall matters too.

PORTLAND MUSIC CULTURE

THE RECORD STORE STILL MATTERS





Streaming has changed how people listen to music.

But it has not eliminated the record store.

Far from it.

Portland continues to have a strong culture of physical music discovery, with independent stores serving as meeting places for listeners, collectors, musicians, and people who simply enjoy wandering through shelves of music.

Music Millennium, which opened in Portland in 1969, is owned by Terry Currier, who has operated the store since 1984 and acquired full ownership in 1996 and is recognized by Travel Portland as the city's oldest music store. The store's inventory includes vinyl, CDs, used recordings, collector material, and other music-related items.

That history and story is important.

But the real value of a record store is not simply how old it is.

It is what happens inside.

DISCOVERY STILL REQUIRES CURIOSITY

You walk into a record store looking for one album.

You leave with three.

Maybe you recognize the cover.

Maybe you hear a song you like.

Maybe you find an old Portland recording.

Maybe you discover a band you have never heard before.

That is the magic of physical music.

It slows the process down.

Streaming is incredibly convenient.

But convenience and discovery are not always the same thing.

THE LOCAL CONNECTION

Portland's record-store culture also connects directly to the city's music history and story.

A record can lead to a musician.

A musician can lead to a venue.

A venue can lead to another band.

That band can lead to a producer.

Suddenly one record has become an entire musical map.

That is why PMI Newsletter intends to continue exploring Portland's record stores, music shops, independent labels, and collectors.

Because Portland's musical history and story is not sitting in one museum.

It is still circulating.

It is in people's homes.

It is on shelves.

It is in used bins.

It is in the hands of musicians.

And it is still being made.

PMI DIGGING CHALLENGE

The next time you visit a Portland record store, ask:

"What's one Portland artist I should hear that I might not know?"

Write down the answer.

Then listen.

Then go see them.

PHOTO CAPTION:

Portland's record stores remain important places for physical music discovery, local knowledge, collecting, and community.

THE PMI LISTENING GUIDE

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING AROUND PORTLAND





A Portland music calendar can become overwhelming.

There is always another show.

Another artist.

Another festival.

Another venue.

Another reason to stay home.

At PMI Newsletter, we want to change that last part.

GO SEE THE MUSIC

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One of the central ideas behind Portland Insider Music is simple:

Recorded music is important.

Radio is important.

Streaming is important.

But live music is where the connection becomes physical.

The PMI interview framework specifically asks veteran artists about memorable Portland shows, the evolution of touring, the importance of live performance in a digital era, and how radio has supported their careers.

Those questions reflect something we believe strongly:

A live performance is not simply another way to hear a song.

It is an experience that cannot be completely duplicated.

PMI'S THREE-RULE LISTENING GUIDE

1. SEE SOMEBODY YOU ALREADY KNOW

Go see the band you've been listening to.

Don't wait for the perfect opportunity.
Go.

2. SEE SOMEBODY YOU DON'T KNOW

This is where discovery begins.

Pick one artist from a local bill whose name you don't recognize.

Give them a chance.

3. SUPPORT THE ARTIST

Buy the record.

Buy the shirt.

Tip the musician.

Follow the artist.

Tell somebody about the show.

Every one of those actions helps keep the musical conversation moving.

THE PMI ARTIST CONNECTION

Portland Insider Music has already been building its interview archive, with conversations featuring artists

and bands including **Jake Blair Band, Tevis Hodge & James Rossi,**

David Kahl, Pure Country & Friends, Soul Vaccination, Sal & The Salamanders, and Ben Rice & The PDX Hustle.

Those conversations are part of a larger goal:

Preserving the stories behind Portland music.

Because someday, today's "new" Portland artist will be one of Portland's long-standing musicians.

And when that happens, we want the history and story to still exist.

THE PMI NEWSLETTER PROMISE

We will continue to:

Showcase emerging artists.

Celebrate established musicians.

Talk with the people behind the music.

Highlight Portland venues.

Explore local music history and story.

Share upcoming shows.

Discover independent music.

Ask better questions.

Listen carefully.

And above all:

KEEP PORTLAND MUSIC LISTENING.

**THANK YOU FOR READING
ISSUE #1**

This is only the beginning.

The PMI Newsletter is designed to become a continuing conversation with Portland's music community.

We want every issue to introduce you to somebody.

A musician.

A band.

A venue.

A producer.

A record.

A history and story.

A memory.

Maybe even something you have never heard before.

Because that's what a music community does.

It keeps introducing us to one another.

**PORTLAND INSIDER MUSIC
PMI NEWSLETTER**

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