

John McLachlan biography

Creativity not only flows through John McLachlan's guitar strings, voice and songs, but through his fingertips as he weaves images onto print and web pages. Since 2001, his web and design business, **Gliss Media**, has done creative work for the Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture, Portland Taiko, LiveTourArtists (agents), Creative City Network of Canada and many other arts-related groups.

In 1998 he used another form of creativity to help bail out a money-strapped BC Touring Council for Performing Arts, turning it around in two years. Today, John continues to work freelance doing web and print design for arts and culture-related organizations from solo artists to large institutions.

What really leaps out of this man of many talents is his dedication to bringing British Columbia culture to the forefront. John, who was born and raised in British Columbia, has penned music from childhood memories of life on the coast. In fact, a good portion of his singer/songwriter career was spent touring the coves and inlets, towns and cities of this province, sharing the anecdotes of BC people and their adventures. At one point, he even shared these stories and songs in Bogotá, Colombia at a Canadian festival!

Inspired by his cornet-playing Grandfather, John started cornet lessons in elementary school, switching to the trumpet when he joined the school band. Gordon Lightfoot songs moved him to swap his trumpet for a guitar at fourteen and he was soon playing in casual folk clubs around Vancouver. Uniting his love for BC history and “being in front of an audience” John joined BC folk group “Under the Moss” which later became “Ptarmigan” and took to the road in the 80s and early 90s, bringing a musical history to the ears of thousands of elementary school children around the province. A show with his own trio introduced songs about hand troller fishers of the 1930s, real-life ferry boat captains, and the sinking of the Princess Sophia in 1918, highlighted by archival visuals that entwined the richness of British Columbia's culture for young imaginations.

In 2006, John took a collection of ten songs about BC history and wove them into a website and comprehensive study guide for British Columbia students. Collaborating with Valerie Dare, a Vancouver high-school teacher he produced this comprehensive resource for use in BC Schools. The project is called *Working Lives—a musical history of labour and enterprise*. The songs reflect the lives and struggles of people in the province's past—people who had vision, passion and determination to make better lives for themselves and those who came after them. The lyrics are rich with characters who were resourceful and most of all, creative individualists who found ways, despite adversity, to make things happen.



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