



Musicians of the Midnight Sun

Thank you for visiting the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website. Even though these blogs are being posted many weeks after the launch of the Musicians of the Midnight Sun website, my hope is that they will remain as a document along with the website itself with the intention to give a little bit more of a personal story of my relationships with these featured artists.

Sandy Wilson

As with *John Telgen*, if there is a musician or musicians who have profoundly influenced me in my early musical journeys, *Sandy Wilson* would be at the top of the list.

My first recollection of Sandy was in the local “Super A Foods” grocery store in Yellowknife. He used to wear this buffalo coat. *Sandy* is smaller in stature and with this buffalo coat and full red haired beard, he did indeed look like a small buffalo. He went everywhere with his dog, “Dinkasourous”, a small, pointy nosed mixed breed who totally matched his namesake. The dog would follow him into the grocery store and *Sandy* would be calling out “Dink, what the fuck are you doing, get over here” Dink, where are you?” Until *Sandy* would finally wrangle Dink into the upper ledge where a parent would put their child and Dink would stay there until they got to the checkout counter where he would jump out on to the cashier’s desk and conveyor belt. I was about 12 years old and found this highly entertaining!

Next time I would have seen and heard *Sandy* play was when I was 15 and sneaking into the Gallery and Rec Hall Saturday afternoon jam sessions. I was too young to really know what was going on but enjoyed those jam sessions thoroughly.



'Friends' L-R John Sigvaldason, Sandy Wilson, John Telgen, Terry Mercer at McNiven beach, Yellowknife. (photo, Ken Coach, ©NNSL.com)

Not long after that, I made the switch from playing drums to playing the Bass guitar. I maybe had it in my hands for 4 months when *Sandy* got in touch with me to play with him at a local surf and turf place called “The Cantina”. He was in between bands and scored this duo gig playing Jazz standards with saxophone player, *Colin Burgin*. *Colin* was taking an extended holiday so I filled in with *Sandy* as best I could. I had just learned how to read notes on a music staff, had some rudimentary licks I played to death to get through the gig. *Sandy* was infinitely patient with me and in those weeks we played together, taught me how to improvise a Bass line over a set of chord changes, the fundamentals of any improvising Bass player that has served me very well over the years.



Easy listening Jazz is the style of this Yellowknife group that has been playing in the Hoist Room in recent weeks. Nucleus of the group is Pat Braden (bass), Colin Bergen (sax) and Sandy Wilson (guitar). The trio also features a number of guest performers.

Jazz Quarter. L-R Pat Braden, Colin Burgin, Bill Gilday, Sandy Wilson. Hoist Room, Yellowknife, NT, 1979. (photo © NNSL.com)

After school, I would head over to *Sandy*’s place and talk music and listen to the music that turned him on. I was hungry to learn, to hang out, to hear his stories and just get better at being a musician.

Later on, he brought me into the band “Friends” where we played six night house gigs at bars in town, playing a wide variety of music genres. That gig went on for about 3 years before I left for music school. At that time, *Sandy* was a mentor to me and through the years, became and remains a dear friend.



Me and Sandy, Brockville, ON, Sept. 2018