



# 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.

## Wayne Bertrand

I am sure I would have seen and heard *Wayne* playing guitar with a few bands before I started to play with him in the mid 1980s. He would have been playing the teen dances upstairs in the Legion with “Stained Glass Illusion”. I would have been to the teen hangout / youth centre in the basement of the United Church just down the street from my house in the early/mid 1970s. Or gone to one of the outdoor shows that used to happen at McNiven Beach, where local and out of town bands would play sets on a flat deck or plywood stage on a Sunday afternoon. *Wayne* would be about 10 years my senior so there was no way that he and I would have hung out together. In the years I was playing in the bars, I would have met *Wayne* but not played with him. I knew who he was, he knew who I was but our musical paths never seemed to intersect.



L-R John Tees and Wayne Bertrand. St. Pat's school, Yellowknife, NT 1966 (photo courtesy Wayne Bertrand)

I was so lucky to be in the music scene when I was. When I was in high school, I was playing in the bars 6 nights a week with the band “Friends”. When I went out to music school, I would come back in the spring and within a day, have a straight job and a steady gig for the summer. In the spring of 81, I believe, I returned to town and was invited to play with a band called “Shadowfax”. The Bass player had recently left the band and took his PA system with him. So, I joined in with *Lawrence Carr*, *Murray Grabke*, *Peter Robinson* and *Wayne Bertrand*. We convinced the late *Sam Yurkiw*, the bar owner who had hired us for the summer, to front us the money to buy a PA system big and loud enough to handle the high energy rock songs we were playing. Amazingly, he did just that and we played the summer through, paying off this PA system. Some very wild gigs with that band. Seemed where ever we played, fights would break out.



“Shadowfax / Bad Boys L-R The late Murray Grabke, Wayne Bertrand, Peter Robinson, Lawrence Carr, Pat Braden. Yellowknife, NT 1983

Bands come and go, as we know. A few more years passed and in late 1986 or early 1987, I joined another group that included *Wayne*, along with *James Milligen*, *Tom Hudson* and *Norman Glowach*. The band focused on a collective songwriting concept and along with Guitar player, the late *Paul Tanner* and keyboardist *Sue Leon*, we became “The Komatiks”. We went on to play many, many shows in Yellowknife between 1987 and 1989. We were all working day jobs so we would take a stipend from our wages from the gig and re-invest that into a PA system and recording gear. “The Komatiks” recorded an album for CBC Northern Service titled “Spirit of the Wind” and not long after, suffered the well-trodden path of many bands by breaking up shortly after.



“The Komatiks” L-R Tom Hudson, James Milligen, Norman Glowach, Sue Leon, Wayne Bertrand, The late Paul Tanner, Pat Braden. Yellowknife, 1988

Again, it was so good to hear *Wayne’s* stories of growing up and playing music in Yellowknife in the 1960s. A passionate musician, *Wayne* paid attention to the comings and goings of local and touring musicians and bands, encouraged a lot of interaction by opening his home as a jam space and was making good enough coin to be able to afford good gear and a fine record collection. His insights and recollections into the Yellowknife music scene proved invaluable to the Musicians of the Midnight Sun Project.