

Check It Out! Podcast Transcript
Episode #20 “Strings, Selma and seeing the future”
Sno-Isle Libraries, April 26, 2019



Ken Harvey: 00:00 In this episode, we have something special in store for you. We have three short stories where you'll hear about a classical fusion guitarist and TEDxSnoIsleLibraries speaker who lives in the area. We also have a story about local hero, Selma Bonham, from the Mill Creek community. And finally, some reading suggestions from one of our librarians. Stick around for all three stories, coming right up on Check It Out.

Ken Harvey: 00:35 Welcome to season two, and episode 20 of Check It Out, the Sno-Isle Libraries podcast for lifelong learners with inquiring minds.

Speaker 2: 00:42 The views and opinions expressed on this podcast may not necessarily reflect the official position of Sno-Isle Libraries.

Ken Harvey: 00:50 This is Ken Harvey.

Jim Hills: 00:52 And Jim Hills.

Ken Harvey: 00:53 And we are joined in the studio by Abe Martinez, who is the owner/operator of North Sound Productions, and Abe, thank you very much for joining us.

Abe Martinez: 01:05 Well, it's my pleasure to be here.

Ken Harvey: 01:06 We're here, we've got you here in the studio to talk about a story that you did recently for us, interviewing a fine, fine gentlemen named Andre Feriante.

Abe Martinez: 01:17 Yeah.

Ken Harvey: 01:18 Yeah.

Abe Martinez: 01:19 He's a great guy, he was interesting to talk to on many different levels, and I enjoyed doing this story with him.

Ken Harvey: 01:24 So that story's going to be coming up in just a minute, but before we get to that story, I wanted to have you just tell us a

(Continued)

little bit about who he is, and I'll just do the initial kind of spoiler alert. Andre was a TEDxSnoIsleLibraries speaker in 2016, and his TED Talk, TEDx Talk is featured on our YouTube ... well, it's available through our website, you can find that think through Sno-Isle.org/tedx. And he is a classical ... classically trained guitarist, and a spoken word poet.

- Jim Hills: 02:06 It was really interesting, I think. You hear his music, and then understand what he feels and thinks about it. That TEDx piece was really, really interesting.
- Abe Martinez: 02:16 Yeah. And he goes into a good bit of that. I did want to get into this piece, what he did in terms of his thinking with the TEDx talk, and what the presentation meant to him. Some of the things that kind of didn't make it into the final cut though, is what happened as a result of that. And you can see that-
- Ken Harvey: 02:39 Happened as a result of ...
- Abe Martinez: 02:41 The TEDx talk.
- Ken Harvey: 02:42 Oh.
- Abe Martinez: 02:42 Yeah. Since that time, he actually is doing more spoken word, more poetry, written poetry before, and that's always been something that he used, but he's not a singer. So his lyrics, so to speak, did not make it into the songs that he writes. But he's figured out a way to use more of that poetry, and to tell more stories. And much of this was spurred on and encouraged by his time that he ... his presentation, rather, and all the training that went into it for TEDx.
- Ken Harvey: 03:13 Well I'm delighted to hear it because I just happen to have been his coach, so ... and that was something that he and I had talked about and I had really encouraged him to really that part of himself come forth.
- Jim Hills: 03:24 I hadn't heard that before, I'm looking forward to hearing the episode because I did see something about Andre at an event at a venue on Whidbey Island where he was performing. And it was not what I expected him to be doing. It seemed more like an interesting meld of his music, and spoken word, and there were some others on the bill, and it seemed like more of a group piece. I thought, wow, that would be really interesting to go see.

Abe Martinez: 03:56 Well, you know, that's been one of the interesting things that I've found with his music, is that there's sort of a fusion. Of course he's classically ... of course he's classically trained, but he uses a lot of other jazz motifs that are common, different kinds of things. In fact, one of his more popular tunes that he does is a Beatles tune. So you know-

Ken Harvey: 04:20 Yeah.

Abe Martinez: 04:21 I mean, there's a variety of different things. Now that's not uncommon for musicians to use fusion, but using all these different elements of art, including spoken word poetry, all of this, and then, and this is where really the episode goes, is the healing part of his spoken word, of the music. Because he's looking at this as more ... if I can use the word therapy, in fact, I believe he uses that word. Because it really is like music therapy, and what it means to him, and having gone through some very difficult circumstances in his own life, which he'll talk about in the episode.

Abe Martinez: 04:59 But that's really where he's going, and he realized that he might as well draw on all these arts, and it would seem that, as he's going forward, he's drawing on the arts that are coming from other performers as well.

Ken Harvey: 05:11 Right. So just before we get into the story, he ... I know at one point he was living in Seattle. I think he's now living on Whidbey-

Abe Martinez: 05:18 He is.

Ken Harvey: 05:19 [crosstalk 00:05:19] Yeah, Whidbey Island.

Abe Martinez: 05:21 Mm-hmm (affirmative), he is. I don't remember exactly the town, but yes, he is. So Whidbey Island, and he is actually now a little bit more involved in using the libraries. So he does go and search-

Ken Harvey: 05:33 Way to go, Andre.

Abe Martinez: 05:34 Yeah, he admitted to the fact that he was not a library user. He actually grew up in Italy. We talk about that a little bit in the episode as well. But there was not quite the public library system in Italy that there is in the United States, or that we have, let's say, in the Sno-Isle area. But so it was not something that was common for his growing up experience. But since then, and certainly since connecting with Sno-Isle through the TEDx

talk he has realized the value, and he's doing this kind of work ... well, he's using the library for this kind of research, and then also trying to become more involved as he can as a volunteer.

- Ken Harvey: 06:15 Well, I hope that the listeners as they listen to this episode become so intrigued by it that they then go to the website and actually watch his TEDx talk, because there's something really, really both fascinating and therapeutic in it, and you can join thousands, and thousands of others who've taken the time to watch and listen.
- Ken Harvey: 06:38 So up next, Andre Feriante.
- Andre Feriante: 06:44 My name is Andre Feriante, I am a guitarist, composer, and poet. And I live on Whidbey Island.
- Andre Feriante: 06:53 I was born in Naples, Italy. My father was Italian, and my mother was from eastern Washington. I pretty much spent most of my time in Italy till I was 17. I was about 13 years old, and I heard a Flamenco concert. And that kind of was a turning point in my life. The music really spoke to me in a deep way. And I knew I had to try to study guitar, or learn guitar. And I looked for a Flamenco guitar teacher.
- Andre Feriante: 07:27 At first it was this gypsy guy who lived in a little town. And [Immedio 00:07:32] was a traveler, a wanderer type, and he taught me my first few stylings on the Flamenco guitar. Then, oh, about a year or so later, I was accepted to study with a very well known teacher in Rome called [Henri Rivas 00:07:48], he's from Bogota, Colombia. And I studied with him for about three years, and really got into strictly classical guitar, kind of left the Flamenco stuff behind.
- Andre Feriante: 07:59 I guess the height of my studies was to go to Madrid and study with Andre Segovia when I was 21 years old. But around age 30, I went through a divorce, a rough time emotionally just with the changes in life. And at the same time, during that season, a transition happened in my life in the sense that I started kind of coming into my own, and realizing all of these elements of myself that I hadn't let flourish. That it had been suppressed because of my family upbringing. It wasn't negative, it was just things that are imposed upon you that maybe are suppressing your nature.
- Andre Feriante: 08:39 So a lot of Andre's nature kind of rushed in in a very short period of time. Which it all was filtered through art. Starting to write poetry, or starting to paint, I started to compose music,

none of this stuff I did before, I was just simply interpreting the music I loved, the classical music. So during this transition, I suddenly became a creative person. Things started to kind of come from the past, like the Flamenco music that I loved in the very beginning.

Andre Feriante: 09:12 So my style that I've kind of developed is a fusion. It's classical, it has elements of Brazilian music, elements of Flamenco, elements of folk. And it's also very conversational, and improvisational. It's almost like when you sit down with a friend. You just want to be with that friend, you don't always know what you're going to say, and then the conversations starts to unfold, and that's the way I like the music dialogue to unfold as well.

Andre Feriante: 09:45 Well, a few years back I started becoming aware of Ted Talks. And I thought it would be interesting to be involved somehow. And then I noticed that one of my friends, a violinist, Swil Kanim, a Native American violinist, he actually was involved in a Ted Talk with the Sno-Isle libraries. So I reached out to him, and slowly and in kind of a round about way, I found Ken Harvey. And my concept of course not only was about playing, but for the longest time I have been interested in the healing aspects of music. So then the process started, and we came up with a title, The Power of Music to Heal, Transform, and Inspire.

Andre Feriante: 10:31 Thank you. I wasn't always aware of the healing powers of music. In my early years, I was deeply moved by the songs and how they made me feel. I was transported. It wasn't until I went through a time of deep emotional pain as an adult that I began to see inside the workings of sound, and art, and human intention.

Andre Feriante: 10:59 In regard to libraries, I ... in my upbringing, sometimes big towns, sometimes smaller towns in Italy, my parents never really did take me to libraries. It was in school though, you know, at the different schools I went to. It was common to go to the library and look things up, reference things. So obviously libraries were a part of my life in school. But, I've had a renewed appreciation for libraries since I did the TED Talk with Sno-Isle. And also, moving to Whidbey Island where I have used them, and I appreciate what they have to offer.

Andre Feriante: 11:38 As things are changing a little bit with the digital world, my hope is that the future will always continue to hold this physical space of the libraries for a quiet aesthetic for people to gather, and for something tangible, for the real human contact that seems to be sometimes fading these days. And I really hope that the

digital world does not, in some way, take this experience from the children of the future.

- Ad: 12:21 Is there a preschooler running around in your life? Then check out the Sno-Isle Libraries Countdown to Kindergarten list of 100 essential picture books. Find this book list and many more online at Sno-Isle Libraries.
- Ken Harvey: 12:36 Enjoying this episode of the Check It Out podcast? Head over to the iTunes store, Google Play music store, or most other podcast stores to subscribe, rate the podcast, or leave a review. Your rating and review will make it easier for others to find the Check It Out podcast wherever it's available.
- Ken Harvey: 12:54 This is Ken Harvey.
- Jim Hills: 12:56 And Jim Hills.
- Ken Harvey: 12:57 And we are joined in the studio by Abe Martinez from North Sound Productions.
- Abe Martinez: 13:00 Glad to be here.
- Ken Harvey: 13:01 Hey, we're glad to have you, and we are ... I'm delighted to give you the opportunity to tell us a little bit about a story that's coming up on this podcast that we had actually ... we had actually played in a previous podcast, but we decided to replay it because it's of a remarkable person who's a hero in one of our communities. And her name is Selma Bonham.
- Jim Hills: 13:26 On a really interesting side note, Selma Bonham's name, I know her a little by reputation in the community, but I'm really curious about more about her. Like why is she so well known in the community? In her 90s?
- Abe Martinez: 13:44 Mm-hmm (affirmative), 93 at the time of the recording, so yeah. Well, part of the reason for that has to do with her energy, even at 93, the kinds of things that she decides to take on. It's amazing, she has a lot of broad interests in terms of community activism. Some of it is the kind of thing where people march on City Hall, or something like that. But a good bit of what she does is also very community oriented towards things like the libraries.
- Ken Harvey: 14:17 Well I came to meet Selma probably six, seven years ago. And she was pointed out to me as one of our local heroes, and someone that I definitely ought to meet. And like you said, Abe,

found that she was this bundle of energy, and ... and yet, behind the energy, there seemed to be just a deep resource of experience, and wisdom, and ... someone who just seemed to be a pearl in so many ways.

- Ken Harvey: 14:55 And I'm really fascinated and delighted to share this story again with our listeners. Tell us a little bit about meeting Selma yourself, and what you learned about her, and maybe not just what you learned, but what might ... what people might not hear in this interview, because it just didn't make it to the final cut.
- Abe Martinez: 15:18 Yeah, well, the first thing I would like to point out was actually where I met here, which was at the Mill Creek, I believe it was a community center, in the Mill Creek area. And I wasn't sure if she was going to be there, as it turned out I got there beforehand. And then I saw her drive up and I had assumed that at 93 that somebody was going to drop her off, or something of that sort. But no, she drove herself, and I went immediately, like thinking to be a gentleman to come open the door. And I was going to help her out, she said, "I've got it, it's okay." And it was one of those things where I understood that she had a real strong sense of independence, but couldn't be kinder. It was a terrific opportunity to meet somebody like this.
- Abe Martinez: 16:04 What is interesting to me is that ... oftentimes people who are very involved in a community have deep roots in the community. Her roots aren't actually in the Mill Creek community.
- Jim Hills: 16:18 That's what I came to understand, too, and I think that is an awesome lesson that we can learn from her. Go on, go on.
- Abe Martinez: 16:24 Yeah. I don't remember exactly how many years now that she had been there, but it was less than 10, I believe.
- Jim Hills: 16:31 Yeah.
- Abe Martinez: 16:31 But she is from ...
- Ken Harvey: 16:36 Back east somewhere, right?
- Abe Martinez: 16:37 Yeah, well, most recently she had been in the Washington DC area where she had a career working for the federal government.
- Ken Harvey: 16:44 Yeah, that's way east.

- Abe Martinez: 16:44 Yeah, yeah, that's right. And grew up actually along the east coast. And so she ... she had moved after ... well to be nearer to family, that was really it, but then decided to settle in. But as soon as she got into the area, she decided, "I'm going to find out what's going on here, and what are the needs of my community, and how can I help out and get my hands dirty, so to speak."
- Ken Harvey: 17:12 Wow.
- Jim Hills: 17:13 I just have this image of Selma Bonham like cannon balling into the community there and making this splash, because you're right, she hasn't been around for forever, but everybody knows her.
- Abe Martinez: 17:25 Yeah, that's true. And part of it is that the different causes that she has decided to get involved with. Some were more public in the Mill Creek area. And that's part of what I kind of left out, because a lot of it has to do with things that come into internal politics.
- Abe Martinez: 17:42 But you know, I will say this, and I didn't go there in this piece, but one of the things that really is helpful and hopeful, is when you see somebody with a legacy who has such a history of seeing so much change go on throughout the country, not just in this area, but throughout the entire country. You see that she has some, perhaps, different views on issues such as ... well, that have to do with politics, quite frankly. She and I may not see eye to eye on every issue, but the kindness, and the warmth, and the kind of generosity that was shown in that time that we had together just there, it was one of those very hopeful opportunities for me to connect with someone of that wisdom, that knowledge, that was just really, really important to me, where I went away from that just really feeling hopeful about the future, because I connected with someone from the past, so to speak.
- Ken Harvey: 18:46 Well I really hope as our audience listens to this that they're inspired to be engaged wherever they live. Be engaged in your family, in your neighborhood, in your community, because Selma is an example of someone who can really make a ... who really has made a difference at wherever she's lived, and we all have that opportunity.
- Abe Martinez: 19:09 Yeah.
- Ken Harvey: 19:10 So coming up next, we'll be learning about Selma Bonham.

- Selma Bonham: 19:17 Hello, my name is Selma Bonham. I am 93 years old. I've lived in the Mill Creek area for more than 20 years. I was born and grew up in Hartford, Connecticut. Went to Penn State, studied geology, and did master's degree at Stanford, finished in 1949. There weren't very many women majoring in geology in those days. I was active in a lot of different groups after I retired in 1995. I think the first day we came to Mill Creek I had to see the library. I've loved libraries for my entire life, and I thought I would learn about the community and the region. And sure enough, there was a small, busy library, still there. Not too small, but very busy and active. And made many friends in the library, especially in the book discussion groups. And that's been going for 15 years, which is very unusual for a book group.
- Selma Bonham: 20:34 I organized panel discussions, and one of them was on the Patriot Act. I guess it was World War II, I was in high school. They had identified aircraft in the library. We were worried about the German planes coming over the east coast, so the library was a source of support in World War II. And at first they didn't want girls in the group, but I managed to be allowed in, and identify German aircraft, and roll bandages, and shelve books, and check the shelving. It was fun for me.
- Selma Bonham: 21:29 I think my father, who worked in a department store, was one of the first to hire a black person as a salesperson. They could do menial jobs, but as a salesperson that was a first. That kind of thing really affected me. I saw that this could be done, and that there are ways to improve our country, and I think that that never leaves you, once you're affected, you see how changes how made, and how you can participate.
- Selma Bonham: 22:04 I guess when it was when I was the secretary of Friends of the Mill Creek Library, and the managing librarian said, "Oh, February is the African American month, what can we do?" And I had been active in the peace group in Lake Forest Park, and I said, "Oh, let's have a flash mob start singing the classic We Shall Overcome in the middle of an evening, not a very busy time." We just started singing. And people joined in, everyone knew the song.
- Selma Bonham: 23:10 The event was such a success, we did it over and over again, about four or five times, I think. The Mill Creek Library does a fantastic job with the facility that they have. It's a center of the city, to me. I mean, City Hall is the political center, but the library is the cultural center it seems to me.
- Ad: 23:48 Hey parents, your two to six year old is sure the enjoy the High Five Magazine, available online from Sno-Isle Libraries. Treat

your favorite preschooler to age appropriate stories, poems, puzzles, and activities. Every issue free to download with your library card from Sno-Isle Libraries.

- Ken Harvey: 24:08 We love hearing from our listeners and subscribers, especially if you enjoyed a guest or have a suggestion for a future topic. Drop us a line at CheckItOutPodcast@Sno-Isle.org. Again, that's CheckItOutPodcast@Sno-Isle.org. And let us know what you're thinking. Don't be surprised if we read your comment, or answer your question on a future podcast episode.
- Ken Harvey: 24:33 And for our final story, we have some reading suggestions from librarian Brian Haight. Now Brian serves the Coupeville Library on Whidbey Island. We hope that you'll come on in, or go online to check out some of the titles he suggests.
- Ken Harvey: 24:47 Coming up next, Book Notes.
- Ken Harvey: 24:56 In this Book Notes segment I'm delighted to welcome a member of our Readers' Services team, who worked to put together suggestions for our podcast listeners and others who have a passion for all of the things that we offer at the library. So our guest today is Brian Haight. Welcome, Brian.
- Brian Haight: 25:14 Thank you.
- Ken Harvey: 25:15 So what suggestion do you have for our listeners?
- Brian Haight: 25:19 The book that I want to suggest is called *The Driver in the Driverless Car, How Our Technology Choices Will Create the Future* by authors Vivek Wadhwa and Alex Salkever.
- Brian Haight: 25:31 How are you going to feel when that package you ordered arrives in your driveway, but it arrived by drone? What are you going to think when your friend rides over to visit, and her car parks itself. I say rides over, because her fully electric car drives itself to your house, too. How are you going to act when your cellphone sends personal health info to your digital doctor? This info came from data recorded by your bathroom scale, and your kitchen refrigerator, and car that tracks your driving habits.
- Brian Haight: 26:04 The exponential progress of technology can be overwhelming and leave us uncertain about our futures. Will we benefit from or be harmed by impending technological advances? *The Driver in the Driverless Car* addressed this question and looks in depth at societal implications of technology in our lives. Just glancing at the title and cover of this book will make you think that the

book is just about self driving cars, however, the future of the automobile is only a launching point, or a hook, to get you thinking about technology, and it's potential to impact our lives today and going forward into the future.

- Brian Haight: 26:44 The authors pose three questions as they discuss emerging technology. Does it have the potential to benefit everyone equally? What are its risks and rewards, and does it promote autonomy or dependence? They suggest that we have choices in determining our tech futures, and the choices we make will lead us to a Star Trek like utopian, or a Mad Max like dystopian future. And that future is up to us to create.
- Brian Haight: 27:14 The Driver in the Driverless Car, How Our Technology Choices Will Create the Future by authors Vivek Wadhwa and Alex Salkever.
- Ken Harvey: 27:24 So is this book ... this book is nonfiction?
- Brian Haight: 27:27 This is a nonfiction title, correct, yeah.
- Ken Harvey: 27:29 And this is something that's meant to cause you to think?
- Brian Haight: 27:33 Definitely, yes. And we have this technology in our lives daily that we use, and this is going to take you to a place of thinking about how it impacts your life.
- Ken Harvey: 27:43 So it sounds very intriguing, especially that line that you just shared with us in terms of kind of utopia or dystopia.
- Brian Haight: 27:52 Yes. Yeah.
- Ken Harvey: 27:52 Well, very interesting. How did you come across this book, this title?
- Brian Haight: 27:59 I found it on the New Books shelf. In all of our libraries we have a shelf where we feature the new titles coming into the library, and many times they're close to our customer service desks, and so I get a chance to see those new books on a daily basis, and this one jumped out at me, so ...
- Ken Harvey: 28:14 Well, good, well hopefully it'll jump out to others, especially if they've listened to this podcast. Brian, just one last question, you mentioned kind of the new book shelves. What would people find on those shelves, in terms of different genres, of reading materials, or whatever?

Brian Haight: 28:34 Well we feature a lot of different genres, you're going to find, first of all, broken down by nonfiction and fiction type materials. In the fiction, you're going to find mystery, sci-fi, fantasy, all your favorite genres there. And in the nonfiction section, we really just go the whole range of Dewey Decimal. And these are current titles, these are titles that you want to buy through Amazon, but you don't have to, you can come to your library and enjoy those resources that we provide. So ...

Ken Harvey: 29:02 Fantastic. Well I just want to thank you for being part of this episode. And I am ... I believe that we've got podcast listeners who are going to run to those new book shelves and take a look at what's available for them.

Brian Haight: 29:21 Excellent.

Ken Harvey: 29:21 Thank you for joining us.

Brian Haight: 29:22 Thank you.

Ken Harvey: 29:24 That's this week's episode of the Check It Out podcast. Don't forget to join us next week for another episode. Thanks for listening.