

Matt The Electrician – bio

Despite the name, Matt the Electrician is no longer an electrician, focusing instead on a music career that has spanned the course of two decades, a dozen records, and literally thousands of shows. It's folk music for a modern age, rooted in lyrics that focus on the realities and challenges of the 21st century as opposed to, say, the old-school thrill of hopping trains.

"I don't generally write mining disaster songs," he explains. "I tend to write about things that have happened to me and my family. Songs about the small things in life, which, to me, are really the big things."

With his newest project, Matt gets by with a little help from his friends. Throughout 2015 and 2016, he's focusing on a string of 7-inch vinyl singles. Every new release will focus on collaborations with different artists who've crossed Matt's path over the years, including the bluegrass band Wood & Wire (who appear on the very first installment of the vinyl series), experimental solo musician Little Brave, and others. Rather than record an entire album's worth of material, then carefully plot the album's release for months, Matt the Electrician will release the 7-inch records as they're finished, with each new release following its predecessor by three or four months. The goal? To get new music to his fans as quickly and creatively as possible. The icing on the cake? Matt gets to extend the collaborative spirit that's been present in his music ever since his very first gig in Pacific Grove, CA, when he invited his high school classmates to join him onstage.

"The coffee shop paid me in tips, free coffee and a sandwich," he remembers of that teenaged gig. "I had to fill three hours, and I only had two songs, so I invited all the friends I knew kids from the school orchestra, friends, other kids who had started writing songs and the show wound up being 'Matt and Friends.' That was 25 years ago and that's what I'm still doing."

Years before moving to Texas and launching his career as a boundary-breaking, working-class folk musician, Matt Sever grew up on the West Coast. His parents, a union carpenter and a seamstress, played John Denver and Pete Seeger songs on the family record player, and Matt spent his earliest years surrounded by the things that would later fill his own music: acoustic guitars, timeless melodies, lyrics that celebrated the joys and heartaches of everyday life, and above all else a strong work ethic.

That work ethic served him well in the mid-1990s, when he moved to Austin in search of new horizons and better opportunities. Matt was already playing music by then, and in need of a steady day job to help pay the bills, he began working as an electrician, spending his days wiring houses in the sweltering Texas heat. Once quitting time came, he'd grab his guitar and drive himself to an evening show, usually taking the stage in his work boots and sweaty clothes. "Hi; I'm Matt the Electrician," he'd tell the crowd, hoping his occupation would help explain his appearance. The name stuck, even after his growing fanbase at home as well as abroad, where he's since become a frequently-booked musician throughout Japan and Europe allowed him to hang up his pliers for good.