"You don't really know what **THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE MUSIC IS** until you **GO OUT AND PLAY IT** and people take it in and send it back to you. **I'M EXCITED FOR THAT.** It **BREATHES LIFE** into your relationship **TO IT** again." HANS WILLIAMS

A true feeling



PROVIDED PHOTO BY MADISON RENSING

New Orleans-based singer-songwriter Hans Williams, in a 2026 publicity photo. He recorded his national debut album, 'Songs for the Neighbors,' at his house in the Bayou St. John neighborhood.

Hans Williams' songs graduate from Tulane dorm to Bayou St. John backyard to national album

BY KEITH SPERA
Staff writer

As a Tulane University student, Hans Williams would sometimes play songs on his dorm's fourth-floor, corner balcony.

"It was," he recalled recently, "the perfect spot to project out into the street."

The acoustics may have been accommodating, but the police were not.

There were "many nights of campus security coming up like, 'What are you doing singing at midnight? Everyone can hear you.'

"There's nothing better than singing in your yard. It's just that at that point, my yard was a very communal space."

Three years after graduating from Tulane, Williams often performs in the backyard of the Bayou St. John home he shares with other musicians.

His neighbors "are very supportive. They really appreciate having music in the neighborhood. We'll host backyard shows that get everyone together."

So perhaps it's no surprise that his debut album is titled "Songs for the Neighbors," not "Songs for Campus Security."

On Friday, Giant Music releases "Songs for the Neighbors" nationally on vinyl, CD and streaming platforms. It is Williams' first full-length album

➤ See **WILLIAMS,** page **2D**

Therapy in every mix

This bartender holds down Buffa's graveyard shift with an unlikely weapon: Malört

BY KASEY BUBNASH
Staff writer

Danyell Prestridge doesn't particularly enjoy drinking Malört. But, then again, does anyone?

The bitter digestif has long been a rite of passage for locals in its hometown of Chicago, admired there for its intense flavor despite being described by its own distiller as "not a drink for most people."

Yet, a little over two years ago, Prestridge noticed that many of the New Orleans service industry workers who haunt Buffa's Bar & Restaurant during her graveyard shift were searching for Malört. The liqueur has been gaining steam nationally since its first step outside Illinois in 2013, championed locally by bars like Pepp's Pub.

Buffa's didn't stock the stuff, though, so Prestridge convinced her bosses to buy a single experimental bottle to see if it would sell. She even offered to cover the cost if it didn't.

"And it moved," Prestridge said.

Within a week, that first bottle was gone. Soon Buffa's was buying Malört by the caseload and offering beer and shot specials like the "trailer park handshake," a shot of Malört paired with a can of Paradise Park. Prestridge ran with it, and, like any good Louisiana native would, she put Jeppson's

➤ See **BARTENDER,** page **2D**



Danyell Prestridge poses for a portrait with a frozen Malört at Buffa's on Esplanade Avenue in New Orleans.

STAFF PHOTO BY ENAN CHEDIAK

Pizza cutter a handy gift



Dear Heloise: As a shower gift before my wedding, a friend of mine gave me a pizza cutter. I smiled and said, "Thank you." We eat pizza, so I knew it'd get some use. And it sure did! I cut brownies, cookies, noodles, play clay, and a couple of ribbons, and I even opened some boxes with it! What a useful gadget a pizza cutter happens to be. **— Patsy L., in Fargo, North Dakota**

Oil-based polish

Dear Heloise: I clean my stainless steel appliances with oil-based furniture polish, and it works great! It cleans them and protects them against water damage. **— Cindy, in Auburn, New York**

No more foggy mirrors

Dear Heloise: I hated it when my bathroom mirror would fog up after each shower. Finally, a neighbor told me to combine shaving cream and rubbing alcohol, mixing them very well until they form a thick, foamy texture. Then you just clean your bathroom mirror with this mixture. No more foggy mirrors! **— Ava K., in Englewood, Florida**

Avoid a mess

Dear Heloise: I have a way to keep rims on paint cans clean; it saves trying to pry lids off or allowing the paint to dry under the rim. First, buy a plastic paint pouring lid (costs just over $1), attach it to the inner rim, and use it to pour the paint into another container. This keeps the paint from getting into the rim.

I also use it to wipe the brush, which, again, keeps the rim clean. The same one works on both gallon- and pint-sized cans. They can be washed clean after each use. **— Julie H., in Manhattan, Kansas**

Julie, what a great way to avoid a mess and save money! Thanks for writing in. **— Heloise**

Send a hint to heloise@heloise.com.

Knotted up in shame



Dear Annie: I'm a 31-year-old woman and have managed a small business for four years. I'm stern but fair, very capable and very attractive. I've dealt successfully with skepticism and flirtation, and I have always maintained my dignity and friendliness. A few days ago, however, I had an experience that severely shook me.

From my office, I heard some employees arrive at quarter to 9. Humiliating as it felt, I had to "mmphff" as loudly as I could to get their attention. I'd arrived at the office three hours earlier to do some work and was accosted by robbers. They made me open our safe and left me very tightly bound, gagged and hogtied face down on the floor. I spent the next three hours struggling, desperately trying to avoid being seen in this embarrassing condition.

I could barely lift my head, but I heard a number of my staff open the door, oohing and gasping as they rushed toward me. My secretary reached me first and began trying to pull the gag from my mouth. Others started working on the various knots (I'd been bound with five or six strips of cord).

My plan had been to jump up after I was free to demonstrate my resilience, but I was just too tired. After working on those knots for a while, I could finally stretch out, and they helped me to a chair. When this embarrassing ordeal was finally over, I walked a bit and could only manage a "Thanks, guys," as I sat down and tried not to cry. It was just so humiliating to have my staff see me in such an undignified condition.

I'm obsessed that whenever they look at or think of me now, they'll picture me helplessly tied up on the floor. I just want to disappear forever. I'm so embarrassed, and I really feel like quitting and hiding in my house forever. I'm very depressed, and if it weren't for my loving husband, I'd be a complete basket case.

Annie, do you think I'll get over this? Can I do anything to put this behind me? **— Tightly Bound**

Dear Tightly Bound: I'm so sorry you went through such a frightening ordeal. It happened only days ago, so be gentle with yourself. You can't expect to bounce back overnight.

If you haven't reported the robbery to the police or received medical attention yet, please do. I strongly encourage you to speak with a therapist, too. What you went through was terrifying, and you shouldn't have to work through it alone.

As for your employees, I imagine they felt nothing but fear for you and relief that you were alive. Don't confuse being helpless in a dangerous situation with being weak. You were the victim of a crime, and you have absolutely nothing to be ashamed of.

You've spent years proving yourself as a capable leader. One awful morning doesn't erase any of that. You asked whether you'll get past this. I believe you can, but you don't have to hide your pain to prove how strong you are.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, Nov. 13, the 317th day of 2026. There are 48 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 13, 2015, Islamic State militants carried out coordinated attacks in Paris at the national stadium, in a crowded concert hall, in restaurants and on streets, killing 130 people in the worst attack on French soil since World War II.

Also on this date:

In 1775, during the Revolutionary War, American troops captured Montreal under the command of Continental Army Gen. Richard Montgomery.

In 1909, 259 men and boys were killed when fire erupted inside a coal mine in Cherry, Illinois.

In 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed a lower-court ruling which found Alabama bus segregation laws were illegal.

In 1971, the U.S. space probe Mariner 9 went into orbit around Mars, becoming the first spacecraft to orbit another planet.

In 1982, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

In 1985, some 23,000 residents of Armero, Colombia, died when a volcanic mudslide buried the city.

In 2001, U.S.-backed Northern Alliance fighters in Afghanistan entered Kabul as Taliban forces retreated from the capital city.

In 2022, four University of Idaho students were fatally stabbed in their off-campus rental home in Moscow, Idaho. (Suspect Bryan Kohberger was given four life sentences without parole after pleading guilty to the murders in 2025 in a deal with prosecutors to avoid the death penalty.)

Today's birthdays: Actor Joe Mantegna is 79. Hockey Hall of Famer Gilbert Perreault is 76. Actor Frances Conroy is 74. Actor Chris Noth is 72. Republican U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan of Alaska is 62. Talk show host Jimmy Kimmel is 59. Actor Steve Zahn is 59. Actor Gerard Butler is 57. Olympic swimming gold medalist Dana Vollmer is 39. Actor Devon Bostick is 35. Singer Julia Michaels is 33. Race car driver Lando Norris is 27. Tennis player Emma Raducanu is 24.



STAFF FILE PHOTO BY MADDIE SPINNER

Lyla George joins Hans Williams during his performance on the Shell Gentilly Stage during the 2026 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

WILLIAMS

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following an EP called "More Than One Way Home" and numerous songs posted online.

In an era when fellow Vermont native and singer-songwriter Noah Kahan is filling arenas, Williams, 25, has already built a vast online audience. He has more than 1.5 million monthly Spotify listeners, and his songs have been streamed more than 100 million times.



Not that such statistics impress him.

"All that stuff is trivial to some extent, not reflective of a real music community," he said. "It doesn't necessarily mean you go somewhere and the amount of people that listen monthly (on Spotify) show up. You need to leave and go tour to break out."

Which is why, come January, he'll embark on a three-month tour that concludes with an April 10 homecoming at Tipitina's.

"You don't really know what the relationship to the music is until you go out and play it and people take it in and send it back to you. I'm excited for that. It breathes life into your relationship to it again."

Home recording

Born Johanes Williams, he grew up the youngest of three brothers in Vermont. From early on, he liked recording music, an interest encouraged at Tuck's Rock Dojo, a music school nearby in New Hampshire.

He considered colleges in "music cities" like New York, Nashville and Los Angeles but ultimately chose Tulane, where some friends were also going.

"I was familiar with the musical lineage (of New Orleans) but it wasn't a conscious decision of, 'I'm going to come down specifically for that kind of music.' I just wanted to be in a place that I knew had a scene."

He majored in marketing, at least on paper: "I wasn't that present, let's say. I graduated, which I'll take, and my parents were very happy. But yeah, I didn't pick up much in the marketing classes."

Though Tulane felt "kind of isolated from New Orleans," Williams tapped into the local music community his junior year.

"The musical scene here is so welcoming and spans such a wide variety of music. It feels like everyone has their own pocket musically, but there's also this deep lineage of music that's still being carried on.

"The lack of music business industry here sometimes hurts the city, but it's also something that keeps it kind of precious in a way. Keeps it really pure. I've been very lucky to be part of it."

In 2022, he released a song called "Body On My Shoulders" that he wrote following a dormmate's suicide. Another Tulane friend also died around the same time. And then, in March 2020, the campus cleared out for the pandemic.

"A lot of people at school were dealing with those two (deaths) and then going home for six months in COVID isolation," Williams said. "Body On My Shoulders" was his way "of trying to process that experience. I still write about it to some extent. Maybe not directly, but some of that still lingers. I feel like it is worthy of exploring and writing about."

After graduation, he eventually settled into a rambling house near Bayou St. John. He shares it with Phin Choukas, the producer of "Songs for the Neighbors," as well as fellow musicians Lyla George and Olivia Barnes and painter Xavier Burgess (who, Williams notes, "offsets all the noise that's happening in the house").

A former roommate's bedroom is now a recording studio. Williams' band sets up in the living room and records live whenever the spirit moves them.

"It's nice to own your own means of production and not be stressed about an hourly rate at a (commercial) studio."

The night sounds of nearby City Park were an inspiration. So was a neighbor's cat named Maggie.

"She's this transient creature that moves from house to house, a really fun thing to write about because she has no clue where she's going every night or what her life is like. It's very easy to relate to a lot of the other characters and things I was writing about."

"Harding Road" takes its title from his neighborhood's actual Harding Drive.

"We thought 'road' sounded better," Williams said. "It's about trying to find this familiarity in the neighborhood and when you leave town, you come back to something that feels like home."

There's a palpable richness and warmth to the sound Choukas — who also produced music for Noah Kahan — conjured on "Songs for the Neighbors." Songs feel intimate but not cluttered.

Jonny Campos from the Lost Bayou Ramblers contributed pedal steel guitar, often using a cello bow on the strings to create what Williams describes as "ghostly, droning, dream-like tones."

Trombonist Oliver Tuttle added a bit of brass to some cuts, much to the delight of Williams' funk music-loving father: "My dad's never been happier. Every song I put out, he's like, 'Where are the horns?'"

'Reconciling' emotions

Years ago, Williams introduced a live performance video of his song "Skin" with, "I wrote it to the part of myself that tells me I'm not deserving of love. I wrote it as a reminder that I can overcome that part of myself. Hope you enjoy it."

Clearly, he's comfortable being open about his feelings.

"That's the whole idea. You're giving them up in a way. You're reconciling with them."

Writing about his emotions is "a utility. It's a nice place to put them and then resolve them in some way. It serves some purpose for me in that moment."

His writing of late is less autobiographical. Songs originate as a "stream of subconscious thought, just singing over whatever chord structure or whatever Phin and I are doing together. Then it's about figuring out what's worth holding onto."

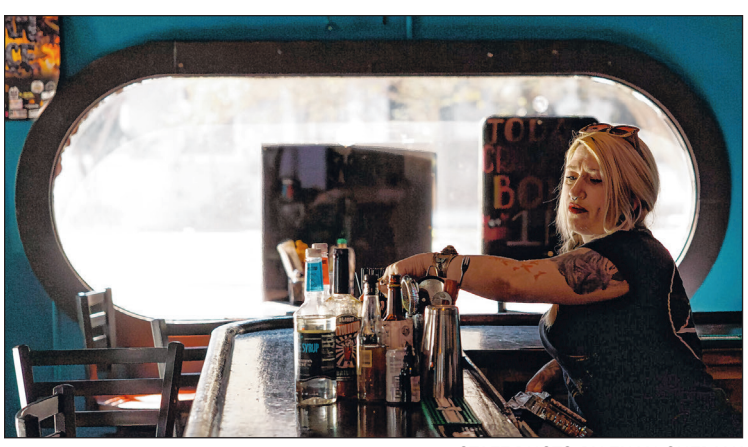
Working out songs on a dorm balcony or in a backyard for neighbors behind a fence — even if they're not paying attention — facilitates Williams' songwriting.

"Knowing that they're there but not actively listening is really helpful because I'm aware of them, and it'll make me try to actually communicate something meaningful.

"It gives meaning to the words. You're trying to have a conversation but if no one is there listening to it, it often lacks that meaning.

"That's what a lot of the project stems from — just that hope that someone is listening in."

Email Keith Spera at kspera@theadvocate.com.



STAFF PHOTO BY ENAN CHEDIAK

Danyell Prestridge works the bar at Buffa's on Esplanade Avenue.

BARTENDER

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Malört in a blender with ice, simple syrup, triple sec and lemon juice, concocting what must be a one-of-a-kind frozen.

A sign standing outside Buffa's for some time read, "Frozen Malört. You read that right." People wandering in off Esplanade Avenue still often felt the need to ask, "Is that real?" before ordering a round for their friends.

"A lot more people drink it than I realized," Prestridge said. "People like it — I think."

It's that keen eye for what the people really want, plus a flair for novelty, that has made Prestridge a fixture at Buffa's in her four years at the 24-hour Marigny bar.

Born and raised in Marksville, the 40-year-old Prestridge has been tending bar off and on since she was 17. Her first gig, at a late-night club that often hosted dance parties and featured live music, was her introduction into the world of nightlife. It suited her.

"I'm kind of a vampire anyways," she said.

She's worked different jobs in other fields and at all kinds of sports bars, fine-dining restaurants and everything in between in the years since. But somehow she always finds herself back behind the bar of a dive, usually late at night.

"I just like the laid-back atmosphere," she said. "… It's the interaction with customers, getting to have regulars that you are gonna see everyday, becoming friends with those people."

The graveyard shift, which at Buffa's runs from about 8 p.m. to 5 a.m., is not for the faint of heart, Buffa's co-owner Christy Bagley said. Bartenders working those late hours have to be able to hold things down on their own. They have to be willing to do what it takes to keep staff and customers safe.

Prestridge, Bagley said, has been able to do all that while keeping the party going.

"We as owners task her with a great deal of responsibility and accountability," Bagley said, "and she has always accepted the challenge."

Prestridge's clientele is made up largely of New Orleans locals heading home from work in the French Quarter or stopping in for a bite to eat before clocking in. She often finds herself acting as a sounding board for post-shift venting sessions, and she's happy to provide the service.

"You have to basically be somebody's psychiatrist for a little bit," she said. "You gotta talk to people about their life and their issues and whatever's going on with them."

But you have to be careful at Dr. Buffa's. Word has it the go-to prescription there is a shot of Malört.

This story is part of a new series highlighting local bartenders. Want to suggest someone? Email Kasey Bubnash at kasey.bubnash@theadvocate.com.