Three years have now passed since KNKX became your independent station. Though the passage of time means the exhilaration of overcoming our existential crisis and striking out on our own has abated, the waves, both literal and figurative, that began during that extraordinary time continue to resonate throughout our work and region.

In Fiscal Year 2019, we dedicated ourselves to ensuring that those metaphorical waves didn’t all start with us. We looked to you to take part in a dialogue - to tell us what you wanted to hear on KNKX, to be a part of the process - because KNKX isn’t just a radio station. It’s a community. And it only succeeds when we all contribute.

This Annual Report celebrates what you made possible in Fiscal Year 2019. The relationships created through KNKX - with listeners, with musicians and journalists, with community partners, and with YOU - provide the foundation that keeps KNKX radiating forward with strength and purpose, making waves every day as we inform, inspire, and connect our community.
Dear Listeners and Friends,

When we selected our call letters, we did so because they remind us that KNKX “Connects,” and this truly was a year for making connections. We made those connections with you in order to share wonderful music and inspiring stories, to provide an opportunity for us to learn from each other, and to bring us together as a community.

It was especially gratifying to witness the launch of the KNKX Connects series, as we traveled throughout Western Washington to hear stories about the history, the challenges and the successes of the people and places we visited. Everywhere we went, listeners thanked us for being there. They were sometimes surprised (as their communities are rarely covered) and always grateful that they were given the opportunity to tell their stories. We, in turn, were honored to be welcomed at libraries, pubs, theaters, and even a pie social, to meet our listeners in person and strengthen our connection with the communities we serve.

We also connected with the Washington State History Museum to produce a podcast about the McNeil Island prison in South Puget Sound. The podcast and museum exhibit told unforgettable stories about a Forgotten Prison, and helped to lift the fog off an island we’ve seen for many years, but never knew. This project, which was presented “digital-first”, is an example of how traditional radio is changing and how KNKX is adapting to changing listening habits.

Our jazz and blues connections also grew this year, as we presented the biggest names in music today, the best in Northwest talent, and the next generation of rising stars. Original performances from renowned artists like Christian McBride and Karrin Allyson along with the youthful enthusiasm students bring to each of our School of Jazz Studio Sessions consistently remind me that KNKX plays an important role in connecting jazz’s present to its future. I’m proud to say that the performances from our Seattle studios have now garnered over 22 million views on YouTube.

This year, we’ve been laying the groundwork for more meaningful connections with South Sound communities, including the renovation of our new Tacoma home! We’re now broadcasting from the Theater District in the heart of downtown. We chose this location, in part, because of the local connections and partnerships it will make possible as we create more opportunities to convene the community in concert and conversations. Up next is an expansion of our Seattle studios. I look forward to sharing more about what we have planned in the coming months. It’s certainly an exciting time to be a part of KNKX!

Our connection with you is why we are here and why we can continue to grow. Thank you for your support and belief in all that we can do together.

With gratitude,

Joey Cohn
President and General Manager
It would be an understatement to say that the media landscape has experienced dramatic change since KNKX, then KPLU, first took to the airwaves in 1966. The station has continued to grow and evolve with the changing times, adding signals (now totaling 12 across Western Washington), increasing our coverage area, bringing jazz and blues into the fold, and embracing the web and social media. What was once just a radio station is now a multi-channel, multi-format media organization that strives to meet listeners where and how they want to listen.
Audiences connected with KNKX in FY2019...

- On the radio: 394,000 listeners
- Through digital on-demand: 1,722,483 downloads
- At knkx.org: 6.1 million pageviews
- Streaming online or with a smart speaker: 722,000 subscribers
- On social media: 54,099 total followers
- On YouTube: 4,969,319 views
- In person: 6,583 event attendees
The connections listeners build with radio hosts and personalities are often deep. The familiar voices that stay with you as news breaks and move you through the day with uplifting music are with you for hours every week, on your best and worst days - but the nature of radio means that often those relationships are one-sided. That’s why we relish opportunities to connect directly with our existing listeners and introduce new audiences to KNKX’s unique brand of NPR news, jazz, and blues.

In Fiscal Year 2019, this priority manifested itself through a day of free Summer Jazz at Tacoma’s beautiful Point Ruston. It meant a live, in-depth discussion from a packed University of Washington auditorium between NPR’s national political correspondent, Mara Liasson, and our own All Things Considered host, Ed Ronco, about our country’s current political moment. And, in a tradition that has been connecting listeners and students to the joys of jazz for over 20 years, KNKX visited Olympia’s Capitol Theater with Jacqueline Tabor and the Tumwater School District Jazz Band for our annual Holiday Jam.
Those same listeners that made public events possible by generously supporting KNKX in Fiscal Year 2019, also joined in on the chance to fulfill the basic needs of our community by donating during the KNKX December Drive. In a 4th annual partnership with Northwest Harvest, KNKX listeners helped fill 1,760 backpacks with food for the Three Squares program to help provide childhood hunger relief in high needs schools throughout Washington State. Northwest Harvest is doing important work throughout the Puget Sound region, and KNKX listeners graciously stepped up again to make sure our community is healthy in body, as well as in mind and spirit by supporting public radio.

KNKX was also thrilled to partner with Street Bean Coffee Roasters this year on a signature blend for our Fall Drive. Street Bean is a local, nonprofit coffee company that dedicates itself to providing on-the-job training and work experience for at-risk youths. This partnership meant that we could offer a fantastic, limited edition thank you gift to KNKX listeners, while also sharing the story of Street Bean and their outreach programs.

KNKX seeks to continue partnerships like this, that nurture other nonprofits and in turn, our community as a whole.
As a news outlet dedicated to regional journalism that extends beyond major city centers, KNKX launched KNKX Connects in Fiscal Year 2019. This year-long reporting project focused on telling the distinct stories of local communities with a live All Things Considered broadcast from those same locations. In each installment, the KNKX news team covered unique histories and traditions, what challenges these communities face, how national conversations are impacting local residents, and much more with nuance and insightfulness. KNKX Connects highlighted the endless diversity of stories and cultures found within our region while also showing how we’re connected to each other through the overarching identity of the Pacific Northwest.
Forgotten Prison

Masterful storytelling and regional journalism serendipitously united in Fiscal Year 2019 with KNKX’s inaugural digital-first podcast, Forgotten Prison. This year-long project, spearheaded by KNKX reporters Simone Alicea and Paula Wissel, evolved from Post-its on a whiteboard to a fully formed exploration of the fascinating history and complicated present of Washington’s abandoned federal penitentiary on McNeil Island. In collaboration with the Washington State History Museum, Alicea and Wissel took listeners on a six-episode, sound-rich journey to the island, sharing the stories of former prisoners, guards, families who lived on the island and current residents.

KNKX’s commitment to building more connections throughout our region, telling the unique stories of the Pacific Northwest through multiple channels, and creating unforgettable listening experiences is truly epitomized with this project. Forgotten Prison represents the longform, deep journalism made possible through continued listener support and community partnerships.
KNKX News

NPR remains one of the most trusted news sources in the world, providing fair and balanced coverage of the events of the day from the United States and around the world. The KNKX news team, by extension, provides the same service for the Puget Sound region, covering stories that keep listeners connected to their local communities. As the number of sources for local news shrinks and newsrooms consolidate, this regional journalism has become even more important to the civic and cultural health of our home.

The issues impacting our nation on a large scale - immigration, environment, wildfires, homelessness, elections - are shared through a Northwest lens and from a local perspective on KNKX. These are issues we deal with every day, and KNKX’s beat reporting system ensures the right person is there to cover the stories that matter in our region.

**Wildfires**
Washington experienced wildfires and heavy smoke from forest fires in nearby states last summer. It was the second consecutive year that our region was turned into a place where the air became unsafe to breathe, and staying indoors in the summer due to bad air quality was shocking and worrisome for many. KNKX covered many of the fires but also interviewed experts and analyzed the topic even further through our weekly weather segment with UW meteorologist Cliff Mass.

**Midterm Elections**
In addition to key races and measures, KNKX covered the general election in November through the eyes of voters either new to voting or new to their circumstances. We profiled five individuals who talked to us about how their life and situation was influencing how they voted – from a new immigrant and recent U.S. citizen, to a newly retired woman on a fixed income.
Immigration
The national debate over immigration is being actively played out on a local level — from detention centers and schools to places of work. Western Washington has plenty of examples of this, given that we have a privately-run detention center in Tacoma, universities and colleges that welcome international students, and economic sectors such as technology and agriculture that depend on an international workforce. KNX covered this topic from many angles to uncover the facts and the real human experience behind the issue.

Homelessness and Affordable Housing
Housing is tight across our region and not just in the large cities. There are a record number of people experiencing homelessness — living in tents, cars, and on the streets. KNX has been examining how different communities have responded to this crisis. Emotions are running high as people with established homes and businesses react to local government locating homeless housing services in their neighborhoods. KNX reporter Will James, spent much of the year covering housing and homelessness, with a special focus on how these issues are playing out in the South Sound.

Education
Education coverage was robust throughout the year, with investigations into school district spending, the accuracy of graduate rates, and a look at how teachers are handling reading lists that include authors who have been publicly outed for sexual harassment. We also sought to answer a variety of questions about our education system: How well are taxpayer dollars being spent? Are our children receiving the education services they deserve? Are educators being fairly compensated for their work? Dozens of KNX stories covered these questions and more.

Environment
KNX closely tracked the state of the environment in Western Washington from potential threats to advances in technology that can lead to a cleaner place to live. Accessing nature is also something we investigated, including how people who have traditionally not felt welcomed or face barriers are getting up to the mountains for outdoor recreation. Of special note was Bellamy Pailthorp’s coverage on the continued debate over construction of a liquefied natural gas plant at the Port of Tacoma, including a 3-part, in-depth series in late May.

the Big Stories
Photos: Parker Miles Blohm
Every person has a story worth telling, and Sound Effect is there to uncover each one. KNKX’s hour-long storytelling podcast selects a theme each week and connects it to lived experiences, both groundbreaking and intimate, that all combine to create our collective Pacific Northwest identity. As Gabriel Spitzer, host of Sound Effect likes to say, these are the stories of the person standing behind you in the grocery store. The stories of ordinary life made extraordinary and stories of the extraordinary impacting ordinary life. Sound Effect continued to build its legacy in Fiscal Year 2019 with voices ranging from that of famed Northwest chef, Graham Kerr to “serious cat artist” Agnes Bodor. We heard from a team of over-50 women’s division basketball champions and a Seattle attorney who eats three meals a day on $75 per month. It’s impossible to encompass the sheer variety of stories Sound Effect packs into each year with a single paragraph. It’s a show that should be savored every week as an example of what brilliant public radio journalists can accomplish with the help of listener support.

If there was one can’t-miss episode of Sound Effect in Fiscal Year 2019, it was the special episode dedicated to Harborview Medical Center - a local landmark and Level I Trauma Center that covers 4 states. The stories of life, death, and recovery add a multi-faceted human face to the building that has played a major role in so many lives.
Under the leadership of new Music Director, Carol Handley, KNKX continued to hone a vibrant music mix in Fiscal Year 2019, with tracks reflecting the eclectic nature of jazz. The line-up of programs dedicated to showcasing all that jazz has to offer - *Midday Jazz*, *The New Cool*, *Jazz Caliente*, *The Art of Jazz*, and more - ensured the many incarnations of this constantly evolving American artform were well-represented to listeners in the Northwest and around the world on Jazz24.

KNKX went beyond playing music tracks on the radio in Fiscal Year 2019. We were out in the community with opportunities to see live music, including Seattle’s Northwest Folklife. We were recording video and audio at Centrum Port Townsend, Victoria Jazz Festival, and other local venues to share exclusively on *Jazz Northwest* and on our popular Youtube channel. We brought you original interviews and music performances through signature studio sessions, only found on KNKX. And since our service to the community isn’t just about playing jazz, but about celebrating and preserving its legacy, this year we also digitized and archived a music library of over 10,000 CDs for future accessibility. Through all of this, KNKX is here to show listeners that jazz never goes out of style.
John Kessler kept listeners grooving every Saturday and Sunday night throughout Fiscal Year 2019 with his thoughtfully and expertly curated KNKX mainstay, All Blues. Between the classic blues riffs of Muddy Waters and the modern swamp rock of Marcia Ball, Kessler always takes the time to share the story behind the music, including a special program during Black History Month highlighting some of the most important songs of the civil rights era.
For years, KNKX’s Seattle studio has been a revolving door of the who’s who in modern jazz and blues as we welcome artists in for the opportunity to share their love of music through both conversation and song. In Fiscal Year 2019, our Studio Sessions mirrored our airwaves as artists from across the jazz spectrum visited KNKX, including nationally recognized stars like Paula Cole, Christian McBride, and Jazzmeia Horn, local favorites like Jacqueline Tabor and Pearl Django, Latin jazz ambassadors The Rumba Kings and duende libre, and New Cool artists The Bad Plus and Tyrant Lizard. Invigorating performances by Larkin Poe and Cary Morin also brought in the sound of the blues. Plus, in partnership with the Seattle Repertory Theater, KNKX hosted a powerful session with the cast of “Nina Simone Four Women”, featuring songs of protest inspired by the civil rights movement.

Studio Sessions demonstrate what KNKX is working toward, as a regional public radio jazz and blues station. They represent the best in local and national artists, keeping us dialed into the regional jazz scene, while also keeping an eye on the big picture of contemporary jazz.

Signature Studio Sessions

60 Studio Sessions
Jazz is a powerful connector for listeners worldwide. No matter where you live, what you believe or what language you speak, the common language of music cuts through the clutter. In Fiscal Year 2019, KNKX’s 24/7 online jazz stream at Jazz24.org continued its reign as the most followed jazz station and online public radio stream in the world. The impact of Jazz24 reaches 51 countries connecting listeners to each other and to the joys of Ella and Miles, Norah Jones, Herbie Hancock, Jamie Cullum, Diana Krall, and countless other artists. As Jazz24 gains popularity and investment from listeners worldwide, the sky’s the limit for this globally-appreciated service.

631,000 total followers
51 countries
Wave of the Future: School of Jazz

At KNKX, we believe that serving the community as a public radio jazz station requires more than just playing jazz on the air. Furthering music education and cementing the future of jazz is also of great importance, as is enriching communities and schools with meaningful cultural experiences. To that end, in Fiscal Year 2019, KNKX’s award-winning jazz education program celebrated 14 years of mentorships, musicianship, and memories. This program, which has grown year over year, connects mentors with school ensembles, invites student groups into the recording studio, and features student DJs as they share their favorite tunes with Evening Jazz listeners. It’s a constant reminder that a bright future for jazz exists in the hands of today’s youth.

When evaluating the impact of jazz and jazz education on young musicians, there’s no better source than the students themselves. These student DJs describe perfectly the impression left by learning the art of jazz...

I love jazz because it’s all about individual expression and intent. It’s about what you want to say and how you want to say it rather than how well you can re-state someone else’s thoughts.

- Jahnvi Madan, Newport High School

Jazz teaches you how to listen, how to interact with people, how to respect yourself, the music, fellow musicians, and other humans. Jazz really is the best way, I believe, to interact with one another.

- Andrew Vinther, Mountlake Terrace High School

I feel like jazz is often at the intersection of a lot of what makes music worth listening to: harmonic appeal, groove, virtuosity and individual self-expression. As a musician, jazz is never boring because I can always find a way to improve.

- Jonah Panzer, Stadium High School

Wave of the Future: School of Jazz

11 SOJ Studio Sessions

204 Students served

13 Student DJs
The first three years of independent KNKX have been filled with immense growth and opportunity for the station. Now that we’ve gotten a glimpse of what’s possible, KNKX is looking to the future with greater ambitions for increased regional journalism, flourishing community partnerships and expanded youth education programs for both storytelling and music. Plans to move to a more centrally located South Sound facility and the launch of the KNKX Next campaign to fund that move were major first steps toward these larger goals, bringing the next chapter of KNKX’s independence into full swing in Fiscal Year 2019.

Amidst signing a lease at 930 Broadway, in the heart of Tacoma’s theater district, starting renovations, and building the technical infrastructure needed to relocate our main broadcast operation, we also raised nearly $3 million to fund this important project - a pivotal one for the future of KNKX and public media in the Northwest.

The first stage of the KNKX Next campaign is coming to a close as we transition to our new Tacoma home. We’ll next set our sights on expanding KNKX’s presence in Seattle - with upgraded equipment, a state-of-the-art newsroom, and more space to invite the community in for concert and conversation.

We can’t wait to share what’s NEXT at KNKX in Fiscal Year 2020!
Financials

FISCAL YEAR 2019 (MAY 2018 - JUNE 2019)

$8,417,676
TOTAL INCOME

68%
$5,727,321
Individual Support

26.2%
$2,203,400
Business Support

2.5%
$210,040
CPB Grant

1.5%
$127,500
Miscellaneous Grants

1%
$83,454
Earned Income

.5%
$39,417
In Kind Donations

.3%
$26,544
Marketing & Events

$7,085,889
TOTAL EXPENSES

66%
$4,649,801
Programming & Related Services

26%
$1,845,238
Membership & Development

8%
$590,850
Administration

$1,331,787
ADDED TO OPERATION RESERVES

KNKX
Waves of Gratitude

Thank you from all of us at KNKX to all of you who invested in the station you love in Fiscal Year 2019. You made all of this possible, and with your continued support, KNKX will be able to reach new heights in the coming year.

You can bring more essential jazz, blues, and news to your community with your annual support in Fiscal Year 2020! Visit knkx.org/support or call 877-677-5659 to make a gift.
Comments from our listeners

I can’t imagine life in the PNW without this station. - Jacki in Seattle

Independent journalism with a local flair - as good as it gets. - Karl in Everett

KNKX gives me the gift of knowledge every single day! - Maritza in Bothell

KNKX has served for years as my primary source for news, and I don’t know what I’d do without you. Thank you for being so dedicated to bringing quality unbiased reporting to the PNW. - Mike in Puyallup

KNKX is the structure of my life; jump starts my brain every morning, helps me stay on top of news and current events, helps me focus with daytime jazz and makes me smile on the weekends. - Jeanne in LaConnor

My whole family listens to the array of programming at KNKX provides. Thank you for keeping us up-to-date and entertained in the healthiest of ways! - Laura in Bellevue

Thank you for consistently offering voices of reason amid the clamor. - Marilyn in Tacoma

Thanks for being a creative spark in the world. Your station is a breath of fresh air in my life. - Maria in Shoreline

You’re a part of my family’s daily life. Thanks for enriching us all. - Nancylee in Mount Vernon
As KNKX closes out its third year as an independent, community-owned station, your board is pleased to report that the state of your station is strong. On-air and online listenership reached new highs, revenues exceeded projections, and the base of financial support continues to expand. Despite these achievements, station management and your board remain as committed as ever to fulfilling KNKX’s mission to inform, entertain, and engage our listeners.

When KPLU was reborn as KNKX in mid-2016, our objective was not only to continue programming listeners appreciate and rely on, but to improve every aspect of the station’s service to communities throughout Western Washington. We pledged not to become complacent, fully aware that such promises are easier to make than to keep, that the response to a near-death experience usually goes something like this: an immediate, profound appreciation for the gift of life, a vow to live better, followed—all too soon—by business as usual.

Your board and executive leadership team have successfully resisted that pull to the status quo, at least in part because the status quo isn’t what it used to be. When KPLU faced near-extinction, it was an unessential asset of a private university. When KNKX emerged six months later, it was as an independent station owned by its community of listeners and governed by representatives of that community. Independence has imposed the burdens we expected, but it has also created the direct connection to our listeners that we hoped it would.

Our commitment to strengthening this connection is the principle that most fundamentally guides our strategic planning. That commitment can be seen in our decision to begin broadcasting programs from remote locations throughout the region, our renewed focus on local jazz and blues, and our construction of and move to new studios in downtown Tacoma, which will anchor our South Sound operations.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of you, our listeners and supporters. We are grateful for your trust.

Stephen Tan
KNKX Board of Directors
Chair (FY16 - FY19)
Leadership

KNX Board of Directors
Joey Cohn, President & General Manager
Claire Grace, Chair
Stephen Tan, Secretary
(Director Chair: FY16-FY19)
David Veteran, Treasurer
Keith Seinfeld
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My Le Goel

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Greg Dallaire
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Jeanne Juneau (JJ)
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Brian Pearson
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Fred Seidel
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Paul Taylor
Joan Tormow
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Director of Administration
Joey Cohn
President & General Manager
Mary Dunaway
Director of Development
Matt Martinez
Director of Content
Justin Steyer
Director of Digital Media

NEWS
Simone Alicea
Online & On-Air Editor/Reporter
Posey Gruener
Sound Effect Producer
Ashley Gross
Youth & Education Reporter
Erin Hennessy
News Director
Will James
South Sound Reporter
Kirsten Kendrick
Morning Edition Host
Kevin Kniestedt
Sound Effect Producer
Dave Meyer
Weekend Edition Host
Bellamy Pailthorp
Environment Reporter
Kari Plog
Digital Content Manager
Geoffrey Redick
All Things Considered Producer
Ed Ronco
All Things Considered Host
Gabriel Spitzer
Sound Effect Host & Senior Producer
Ariel Van Cleave
Morning Edition Producer/Weekend Edition Host
Jennifer Wing
Sound Effect Producer
Paula Wissell
Law and Justice Reporter

MUSIC
Abe Beeson
New Cool & Evening Jazz Host
Ruby Brown
On-call Jazz & Blues Host
Paul Carlson
On-call Jazz & Blues Host
Carol Handley
Music Director
Paige Hansen
Jazz Sunday Side Up Host
John Kessler
All Blues Host
Robin Lloyd
Midday Jazz & Jazz Caliente Host
Mary McCann
Evening Jazz Host
Nick Morrison
Production Manager
Dick Stein
Midday Jazz Host
Michael Stein
On-call Jazz & Blues Host
Ken Wiley
Art of Jazz Host
Jim Wilke
Jazz Northwest Host

DEVELOPMENT
Stephanie Crouch
Listener Services Coordinator
Adrian Florez
Development Coordinator
Brenda Goldstein-Young
Dir. of Community Outreach & Events
Erik Hanberg
Marketing & Communications Manager
Kaisa Lightfoot
Major Gifts Coordinator
Sarah McAtee
Associate Director of Development
Lindsey Moyer
Member Services Specialist
Kari Young
Director of Major & Planned Giving
Kelly Zaborowski
Data & Gift Processing Coordinator

FINANCE & ADMIN.
Terell Hollins
Director of Finance
Laura Adamson
Traffic Coordinator
Jenna Chapman
Accounting Assistant

DIGITAL & ENGINEERING
Parker Miles Blohm
Digital Media Manager
Tad Doviak
IT Manager
Lowell Kiesow
Chief Engineer
Nick Winter
Assistant Chief Engineer
Making Waves

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