

SHIPWRECKED SHANTY

The San Francisco Bay Area's Premier Sea Shanty Experience.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | OCTOBER 2026

Shipwrecked Shanty Turns Audiences into the Crew

From sold-out themed evenings to corporate celebrations, the Bay Area sea shanty band makes everyone part of the music.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA — What happens when a room full of strangers discovers they can sing together like a crew of old-time sailors? That is the spirit of Shipwrecked Shanty, a Bay Area maritime music group bringing centuries-old sea songs to life through its participatory Shanty-oke performances. Their philosophy is simple: “We sing with you, not at you.”

Born from a Shipwreck. Built on Tradition.

The group traces its roots to Oakland’s Quinn’s Lighthouse, where the late Skip Henderson and his Starboard Watch championed maritime music for more than 35 years. After Henderson’s passing in 2020 and the pandemic shutdown, longtime bandmate James Dean Nelson and fellow musician Micha Dunston helped keep the tradition afloat with socially distanced performances and online broadcasts. The crew jokingly called itself “Shipwrecked.” The name stuck.

Not Just a Concert. A Shared Adventure.

Led by Nelson’s unmistakable vocals and backed by seasoned musicians, Shipwrecked Shanty blends authentic sailor songs, salty humor, and spirited audience engagement. With on-screen lyrics and irresistible choruses, its signature ‘Shantyoke’ invites everyone to join in—no singing experience required. The result recalls the original purpose of sea shanties: bringing people together through a common song.

From the Waterfront to the Corporate World

Recent engagements include a corporate performance at Saildrone’s headquarters, a sold-out themed evening at the historic Pelican Inn, and a fundraiser for members of the San Francisco Opera and Conservatory. The group has also appeared at San Francisco’s Festival of the Sea and is scheduled for Northern Nevada’s Premier Fall Event, Fantasies in Chocolate at Reno’s Grand Sierra Resort.

Whether creating an atmospheric maritime backdrop or leading a room in a rousing chorus, Shipwrecked Shanty offers something rare: entertainment that connects people instead of simply asking them to watch.

After all, we’re all in the same boat. We might as well sing together.

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