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Monday, March 20, 2017 Last update: 4:48 p.m.

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## Waterville songwriter pens 'A Song for Ayla'

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By Christopher Cousins, BDN Staff

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Posted Feb. 16, 2012, at 7:20 p.m.

WATERVILLE, Maine — Everyone has his own way of processing the tragic disappearance of Ayla Reynolds. For songwriter Pete Haase of Waterville, it inspired a melody.

“One morning, I just had this melody with her name come into my mind and I just couldn’t shake it,” said Haase. “It’s not like I sat down and said I wanted to write a song for Ayla. It just came to me. Everything about it just happened.”

So Haase, a hobbyist songwriter and website developer, sat down at his computer and over the course of a week wrote and recorded [“A Song for Ayla,” which he posted](#) in late January to a website called [www.bandcamp.com](http://www.bandcamp.com), which allows free music downloads.

The search for Ayla, who was reported missing by her father on Dec. 17, is close to two months old. It has garnered intense attention in Maine and beyond and put Waterville in the national media spotlight. But so far, few have noticed Haase’s song.

“Two people have downloaded it,” said Haase on Thursday. “I think I have about 16 views so far.”

Haase, 35, a 1994 Waterville High School graduate who later earned degrees from the University of Maine in computer information and business, said his intent in writing “A Song for Ayla” is to keep the girl in the public eye.

“It’s not about me; It’s about Ayla,” he said. “If the arts in any way can help, even if it’s with people dealing with this or opening people up to come forward with information, that’s a good thing.”

Haase, who doesn’t know anyone on either side of Ayla’s family, said he is not

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interested in personal or financial gain from this song or any other that he has written.

"I have never seen dollar signs," he said. "That's why my music is free. To me it's just who I am and what I do and I don't try to fight it. I don't try to become something I'm not."

Haase, who writes [a music blog](#) at [www.petehaase.com](http://www.petehaase.com), said his philosophy around recording music was summed up during last year's Maine International Film Festival in Waterville, where legendary jazz bassist Charlie Haden, who is best known for his recordings with Ornette Coleman, spoke to the audience after a film about him was shown.

"A bass player in the audience asked him, 'What do you suggest people do to become the best bassist possible?'" said Haase. "He said, 'Become the best person you can be.' People were kind of silent for a minute, but he was right. That's one of the reasons we're here on Earth, to become the best person you can be."

Haase said he yearns for closure in the case.

"How could someone do anything but protect that little girl?" he said. "There's obviously someone out there who isn't in the right frame of mind."

Haase shared the song on Wednesday with Trista Reynolds, who is Ayla's mother, through the website [www.aylareynolds.com](http://www.aylareynolds.com). Haase said Trista told him in an email Thursday that it made her smile.

Reynolds said to the Bangor Daily News on Thursday that she was having a difficult day as the two-month mark in the search for her daughter approached, but that A Song for Ayla gave her an emotional lift.

"It's very sweet and very generous," she said. "After a few times listening to it, it sort of sticks with you. It was very nice of Pete to do what he did."

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