



Paul Wellman

All Aboard for Macky World!

**A Look at the Elements Making Up Matthew McAvene's
New Enterprise**

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by [MATT KETTMANN](#) ([CONTACT](#))

Ever since musician and artist Matthew McAvene hit the scene nearly a decade ago, Santa Barbara's live concert stages started becoming increasingly visual and interactive, as his life-sized dancing puppets and colorful set design graced venues large and

small. This year, thanks in large part to an entrepreneurship program at Santa Barbara City College, McAvene—who trained in puppetry at the Jim Henson Company, and has worked as a freelance special-effects artist for Disney, Fox, and Universal—is unleashing Macky World, an umbrella universe for a line of entertainment and retail products featuring the many characters he’s been developing over the years.

“I’ve been conceptualizing these characters for 10 years now,” said McAvene, who’ll eventually be pitching network-television and feature-film scripts, selling stuff both during S.B.’s Sunday ArtWalk and online via mackyworld.com, and bringing his characters to perform at elementary school assemblies across the region. “To see them all coming to life in this past year is really exciting,” he enthused. Here are a few lines to look out for in the months to come, all under the Macky World banner of “Original Stuff for Original Kids”:

1. The Shadowland Explorers: Recently on display at the Elizabeth Gordon Gallery on West Gutierrez Street were five exquisitely designed puppet characters from this adventure saga, as well as a full-sized, toddler-frightening costume named Sherbert. Expect to see trading cards, stuffed animals, magnets, hats, toys, and T-shirts that feature Velcro patches on the chest so kids can interchange the characters they display.

2. Finding Picasso: With four parts already online and more in the works, this features McAvene and his 9-year-old son, Ben—a Washington School student—as they search for the “Picasso within” amid their home studio, with different characters popping by along the way. Visit youtube.com/themackyworld.

3. Deep Sea Hermits: “It’s a hip-hop-based musical group,” said McAvene, starring his son as the lead rapper, “and we’re doing a series of music videos.” Expect the first ones to drop in late August or early September, and they’ll also be part of a retail line, too.

4. Tape Ninjas: “They’re action figures made from duct tape,” laughed McAvene. What kid wouldn’t break out the nunchakus to get one of those?