

PG LOCAL ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Brady Hoggard

With a passion for music since a young age, and experience across multiple facets of the music industry, Brady Hoggard loves being a part of the music community in Pleasant Grove.

This month, we connect with Brady to learn about his experience in music over the years, how he's made music his career today, and how he continues to be involved within the local community in music performance and providing opportunities to local artists and musicians.

Where are you from, Brady?

I was born and raised in Hyrum, Utah, a small town outside Logan in Northern Utah. I spent my entire childhood in the same house. After High School, I moved around across multiple states - from Portland, Oregon, to Oxford, Mississippi - but Utah has always been home. Two years ago I moved to Pleasant Grove, and along with my family, we are excited to become PG Lifers!

What are some of your earliest memories of music?

When I was around 3 years old, my family was at Disneyland. My mother took me to the restroom and I began singing a song for everyone to hear - "Pokey bear, pokey bear, why are you so slow? I don't know..." I sang it over and over again in the bathroom stall, with the words echoing off the walls. Apparently, all the people coming and going in the bathroom were cracking up.

That's a bit of a cheat, as I don't personally remember the experience. But I'd like to think that music has been impactful to me from a young age. While I didn't spend much time performing in front of people (I was rather shy when it came to music performance), I spent many hours in my childhood listening to CDs in my bedroom while reading the song lyrics in the CD insert. I used to sneak into my parent's bedroom and listen to their music, and I knew some of those albums by heart: Mariah Carey's "Music Box", Alabama's "Cheap Seats", the Top Gun soundtrack.

We used to get those stamps in the mail from Columbia House with enticing offers - "Buy 1 CD full price, get 8 CDs for free (only pay shipping!)" I found a lot of really interesting music from bands I'd never heard of, and who didn't like peeling off the stamps that represented the music albums and sticking them on the order form, even if never intending to buy?

Over the years, my understanding of this impact of music has matured, and I feel that I've come to appreciate music in different ways. Music has always been there for me, and I'm grateful for my childhood experiences.



If you could go to a music concert for any artist or band (dead or alive), who would it be?

That's a really hard question. I spent several summers at the Warped Tour festival, and there was nothing like the energy and excitement at those events! Across 6 or more stages, I would spend all day running back and forth, sweating my socks off, crowd surfing (yes I did, several times), and wiggling through the crowds to avoid a mosh pit. I saw so many bands - some that I loved, and others that I was discovering new - and I had amazing experiences meeting the members of bands. They were usually really great people and loved getting to know their fans.

But that didn't really answer your question, did it? While I'd love for the Warped Tour to come back (it really wasn't the same at the end), I'd have to pick The Beatles. While I can't say that they were a big part of my early life, they are one of the most iconic, inspiring and influential bands to ever walk this earth, and I'd love a chance to see them at their finest and relive those years. Preferably, and concert from the middle of their career.

Where did your music performance begin?

My experience with music performance began when I was 12. My cousin was a phenomenal cellist, and I wanted to be just like her. In Junior High, I began to play the cello. I was a short, scrawny kid, and I lugged that cello case over a half mile to and from school every day. And I loved every minute of it.

A year later, I had the opportunity to play the saxophone in the school band. I played in the main band, and later also had the opportunity to play in the jazz band and marching band. In high school, I also began singing in the a capella choir, and I eventually auditioned and made it into the more competitive show choir. Music really took over my life in high school, and it was hard to pick and choose what direction I wanted to take.

When I was 14, my best friend started playing guitar. I hadn't really been around guitars too much before then, but as soon as I saw him play I was hooked. My parents bought me my first beginner guitar for Christmas, and I began playing with my friends. We started a band, and thought we were pretty hot stuff (truth be told, we probably could have sold earplugs at a merch table and made a killing!). One of our teachers was a big support, and he helped to set up regular performance opportunities for a handful of bands at the school. We performed before school began, during lunch periods, after school events, talent shows, and more. I began singing for our group, and I quickly had to get over my insecurities of sharing my voice. It was hard, but became easier over time.

I stayed very active in performing music through high school and into college. I was writing a lot of music, performing that music, gathering feedback to become a better writer. It was such an amazing time.



What instruments do you play?

I love learning to play a variety of instruments, but I haven't really mastered any one instrument (as much as I wish that I had). I am most comfortable on acoustic and electric guitar, and I really enjoy singing. Over time, I've played cello, drums, bass guitar, and more.

In one band years ago, we all played different instruments for each song in our set list. It probably seemed unusual, but I may have been playing guitar and singing one song, then I'd jump on the drums for another song. Then, I'd move over to the bass guitar or another instrument. As unconventional as it may have been, it allowed each of us to learn a bit of each instrument and understand how it all fits together.

What hobbies or interests do you have outside of music?

Most of my time outside music is devoted to my family. We love to play board games, spend time in our yard, go on bike rides, and eat interesting foods. They are a very happy and fun bunch, and I'm grateful that they support my career and music as much as they do.

Are you in a band today?

I'm on a break. :) Last year, I revived an old group called Sarraceno. I formed this group during college, and we played all originals that I had written. We were an acoustic rock group consisting of acoustic guitar, vocals and really cool harmonic cello lines. It was a great coffeehouse vibe and a fun group to be in. That fizzled out as members of the group began to graduate and move on, which was at the point where we were beginning to record our music.

It was always my dream to professionally record that music, so fast forward 10 or more years, and I began to revive that group with new musicians. I recorded all the music, formed the band and we began to play shows locally. I released two short albums with that group, which was my dream come true. We headlined the Orem Summerfest last summer, played here in Pleasant Grove at the Summer Concerts in the Park. And it was all going swimmingly until it all fell apart.

Aside from that, my buddy and I began a project during COVID. He lives in Idaho, and I was living in Mississippi at the time. We decided to write and record a song together as a project, with both of us contributing from afar. We decided to call our group Distant Onset - a new beginning from a distance (as we lived across the country from one another). We released a song called "Another Summer Story" that

was meant to be a summer theme song. It was a great experience, and we are looking to write more music this year to release. Not a traditional band in any sense, but we enjoy working on music projects together.



What does your creative process look like for your original songs?

I'll admit that songwriting is much like any other talent; the more that you practice, the easier it comes. Back in high school, everything I did revolved around writing music. I carried a notebook to every class where I would jot down song ideas or short lyrics to a new song. I would spend all my free filling notebooks with ideas, and compiling ideas together to build a Frankenstein song. I would even wake up in the middle of the night with an idea in my head and jot it down in my notebook. It was a big part of my life.

Today, I think the creative process is a little different. I'm at a much different stage of life, I have a wife and kids - my day to day experience is much different than what it once used to be. As a result, my songwriting feels less sporadic and more intentional.

I tend to focus on a feeling. Whether it's love or sadness, disappointment or joy - I try to capture that feeling, and begin exploring a song concept around that emotion. I often will build a song around a fictional character and their experiences. I try to focus on simplicity, and build lyrics that are well crafted and visual - I don't want a song to be a jumble of words on a page, but a journey or experience that hits home to those listening. It can be a challenging process, and it certainly comes easier at some times more than others. Songwriting is a personal experience, and I don't feel like it can be forced. But the more you practice, the better you get.

Which of your songs is your absolute favorite?

I really like "Another Summer Story" from Distant Onset. If you are looking for a fun summer song to close your summer vacation this year, definitely check it out.

My favorite songs with Sarraceno are either "Synonym for Risk" or "A Walk in the Winter". There are a lot of great songs on those two albums, but these two have a deeper connection for me.

What else are you involved in within the music industry?

For the past 15+ years, I've been involved in audio production, primarily with recording and mixing music clients. After moving to Pleasant Grove, I formed Edison Recording Studio. We work with clients of all experience levels in recording music, audiobooks, podcasts and voiceover work. We love being involved in the community and helping local musicians fulfill their goals and dreams.

I also own a software business called Sonido Software. Sonido is a audio studio management platform that helps audio production studios manage their business operations, and we work with audio studios large and small, with our biggest client to date being Spotify. It's exciting working in technology and helping businesses around the world better organize their business processes and drive new revenue to help them grow.



What advice would you give to anyone in our community that is interested in songwriting or making music?

Practice makes perfect. Songwriting comes more easily to some, but that doesn't mean that it's an exclusive talent. We all connect with our feelings, emotions and life experience in different ways, and songwriting can be a very creative way for us to express ourselves.

For those that have never written a song before, start with thinking about poetry. Begin writing lyrics as an expression of your feelings and interests. Listen to your favorite songs to hear what a general song structure looks like, and try to replicate it with your own words and tone. Try and match syllables from one line to the next so that the structure is somewhat cohesive and similar. Hum the words and find a musical melody that follows your lyrics in a musical way. And if you don't have experience playing an instrument to go along with your lyrics, such as a guitar or piano, find a friend or family member with experience that can help you build a chord structure around your song. Keep it simple. Don't overcomplicate the process, and don't get discouraged if the process doesn't come easily.

For those that are already making music, make it a priority. Life gets very busy, and it's easy to let our passions slide by prioritizing family, work, school, and church. All these things are important. But if music is your passion, you need to make time to pursue your passion. Set goals for yourself and for what you want to accomplish. Do you want to write a new song? Do you want to perform a song for an audience? Do you want to record a song that you've written? Do you want to release a song to music streaming channels? Pick one goal at a time, and prioritize your time; set at least one day a week to focus on accomplishing that goal. You don't have to complete that goal in one day, but set aside dedicated time for pursuing your goal and passion.

And above all, always be proud of your musical accomplishments - and move forward. We learn as we experience, and most of us look back at early music that we've made and think, "if I would have known then what I know now...". Be proud of what you accomplished, and set goals for the next project. And then move forward.

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