

PG LOCAL ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Jace Harmer

This month, we catch up with Jace Harmer, a local musician in the Pleasant Grove community.

Learn more about how Jace grew up influenced by music, how it's been a benefit in his life in many ways, and how his family has grown through music in their home and lives.

Where are you from, Jace?

I was born in Boise, ID. I moved to West Point, UT when I was in elementary school. During my freshman year of high school, we relocated to a farm community in Johnstown, CO. After my wife and I got married, we lived with my in-laws for almost two years in Aurora, CO. When we finally could afford our own place, we built a home in Frederick, CO.

A couple of years later, I acquired a remote tech job and we moved to Pleasant Grove. We've been here for almost 9 years, and we've loved it!

What are some of your earliest memories of music?

I've loved music my whole life. I remember how CD clubs were all the rage when I was a kid. That's where I found my first collection of music. I listened to Enya, Donna Lewis, Boyz II Men, No Doubt, Sugar Ray, and more. I've always had an eclectic taste in music.

In junior high, I learned to play the saxophone and fell in love with jazz and improv.

During high school, I was part of a rowdy punk band. We would rock out in my buddy's basement and play at Battle of the Bands. Although we sounded terrible, I loved the energy and the experience of writing music together. I was also in show choir—mostly as an opportunity to hang around with girls, but I enjoyed dancing and singing show tunes.

Towards the end of high school, I realized that playing the acoustic guitar was a great way to get attention from girls. So, I started writing solo stuff and learning songs to play at parties.

I met my wife, Lindsey, on Myspace, and our relationship had its share of everyday adventures. One night, we got into a bit of trouble for staying out past curfew, and we grounded from seeing each other for two weeks. While Lindsey was on a family road trip, our attempts to talk on the phone were constantly interrupted by lousy reception. Finally, giving up on a phone conversation, I wrote her a song as a special voicemail. That song, 'Dream,' expressed the angst of missing each other and how



meeting her transformed my life. It might seem silly, but 'Dream' became our personal anthem, reminding us of those early moments together.

Lindsey *waited* for me while I serviced a religious mission for two years. During that time, I wrote dozens of songs for her. I had an old Tascam digital recorder and would send her music every month or so. I bought a cheap acoustic guitar from a church member soon after arriving in Wisconsin where I served. I took my guitar everywhere and played at church meetings, missionary conferences, and even at random backyard parties while knocking on doors. I met a friend at a guitar shop in Milwaukee who taught me about open tunings, answered my endless music theory questions, and introduced me to Ted Greene and "Chord Chemistry." At the end of my mission, my dad flew out and allowed me to choose a guitar to take home. I picked out a Seagull Entourage, which remains one of my favorite guitars to this day.

Who are your biggest music influences?

In high school, I listened to emo punk music (AFI, Green Day, Thrice, Matchbook Romance, Simple Plan), classic rock (Pink Floyd, Steve Miller Band, Creedence Clearwater Revival), electronic music (Chemical Brothers, Depeche Mode, Ladytron, Daft Punk, Gorillaz), and hip hop (Guru, Common, Kanye, Notorious B.I.G.). I would spend hours sitting in my red Firebird Trans Am listening to music and reading the CD jackets. I had an iPod video and I would skate to punk and snowboard to hip hop and electronic music.

For a few years, I was dedicated to learning and playing Jack Johnson songs due to his surf style and simplicity.

I LOVE live music. Some of my favorite concert memories include John Mayer at Red Rocks, Coldplay at the Rose Bowl, Michael Buble at the Buell Theater, Jack Johnson at The Alpine Valley Music Theater, Tommy Emmanuel at The Egyptian Theater, Chris Stapleton at Isleta Amphitheater, and The Strike at Velour.



What instruments do you play?

I play a number of instruments, including the guitar (acoustic and electric), harmonica, mandolin, saxophone, banjo, piano, and otamatone (if you've never seen the otamatone, you've got to check it out. So cool!). And I also love to sing.

Do you write your own music?

Most of my music was written to woo my wife. Although much of it has been recorded, it hasn't been widely distributed. I've written music for various family members. I currently play lead guitar for JGMB, but Joel writes the music.

Now, I support my son, Jaxon (Jaxon Clyde). He just released his first song on all streaming platforms. Here's a link to [his song](#) on Spotify. Thanks to Brady at Edison Recording Studio for

helping us record it and get it out there! Jax had another song prepared to record for this first session. However, the weekend before our scheduled studio time we went the songwriter's workshop put on by the Pleasant Grove Arts Commission. He left feeling that his first song wasn't good enough—determined to write a new song to record in the studio. He hid in his room for a few days and "Somehow I Love You" was the end result. My wife and I were concerned when he decided to start over, but he blew us away with his new song. We're super proud of him and can't wait to see what he writes next!

What has your experience been in performing music live?

I've performed in high school auditoriums, around campfires, open mic nights, bars, and small music venues. I love the way music envelops you and connects you to the audience. Playing with a full band like JGMB is a unique experience. I love playing such a variety of instruments. Yet, my favorite group to play with currently is the Jaxon Clyde Trio—comprising my son, Jax, my wife, and myself. I hope to see us on a larger stage in 2024.

Where do you want to be with your music in the next 5 years?

I love playing music, but I struggle to find time to devote to writing new music. I currently want to continue supporting my son and his music. Playing with him on a big stage in front of thousands of people is a dream.

Personally, I want to join a Christian band and play weekly for a congregation.

What other interests do you have outside of music?

I love outdoor activities like snowboarding, skiing, skateboarding, wakeboarding, mountain biking, road biking, swimming, backpacking, and more. Anything outdoorsy excites me, especially challenging activities like backflips behind boats or big jumps on bikes.

I love technology. I'm a software developer by trade. I like to invent things to solve problems around the house. I'm currently working on a smart device locker that powers iPads and phones and sends me a text message when they aren't locked up in time (10pm).

Building things with my hands brings me joy. Our home is a testament to this passion. I have a backyard workshop where I create furniture and picture frames.

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

Understanding music theory is empowering. It enables you to jump in and play anywhere.

Networking is crucial! Connect with fellow musicians in your community. There isn't a playbook for performing live; learning from others' experiences is invaluable. Every chance to play is a blessing, so enjoy and have fun with it!