

PG LOCAL ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Jim Inglese

This month, we catch up with Jim Inglese, a local songwriter and musician. Jim is a wonderful guitar teacher in our community, a warm and engaging performer, and he has been very supportive of local arts initiatives.

Where are you from, Jim?

I am from Queens, New York, where I lived for 20 years. As I kicked off my professional career, I spent over 30 years in San Francisco before we moved to Utah. We now live here in Utah near our family.

What are some of your earliest memories of music?

I have a pretty good memory of music! One of my earliest memories of music was as a child sitting around our family stereo console and listening to Doris Day and other music artists. That was something that I really enjoyed growing up.

In February of 1964, a family friend told us about a band that was going to play on the Ed Sullivan Show, and it was a show that we couldn't miss. It was the first time that The Beatles were to play here in the United States. We watched that show, and the world quickly changed! It turns out that over 73 million people gathered around their televisions to see that historic event - It was the beginning of Beatles fever here in America, and I quickly caught the fever!

Both my parents were musical, and we listened to music in our home, but we didn't own any music instruments. When I was a teenager, my father brought home a guitar. My sister and I quickly found interest in learning to play the guitar, and we were hooked. I would listen to my records and try to play along with the songs that I loved. I would say that it was my beginning as a musician.

Who are your biggest music influences?

The Beatles were a huge influence for me, as I previously mentioned. I have lived through their rise and fall, and it's been spectacular! I also listened to music groups such as the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, Chicago and The Allman Brothers. Really, I followed the music trends as they surged within New York City, and there were so many bands that I have enjoyed over the years.



What instruments do you play?

I play the guitar and sing primarily. This is my absolute favorite combination. I also play the ukulele, and a little bit of mandolin. If I could learn to play another instrument, I'd love to pick up the autoharp.

What has your experience been in performing music live?

I started playing music live in High School after I picked up the guitar. I spent time playing with several bands and tuning my music skills, which was a wonderful experience.



When I lived in California, I played with a group called the Long Ball Hitters, which was an “oldies” cover band. We played music from The Beatles, Creedence Clearwater Revival, John Mellencamp, and other favorites. We would basically play a wide variety of music styles that we thought that people would enjoy listening to.

One of the best feelings in performing music live is connecting with the audience. In that environment, you are really trying to help others have an enjoyable time. People are coming to the show to hear music and have a good time, and I always try to focus on how I can give the listeners the best experience possible.

Do you write your own music? What does your creative process look like?

I really enjoy writing music, and my process is messy! My goal is to not get in the way of the song. As a songwriter, my intention is to deliver a message through music and lyrics that the listener can connect with. It's not as much about the performance, but helping people relate to the story or emotion. As a performer, I try to get the song message to come across without it sounding too much like “Jim”.

As for my songwriting itself, I tend to write music lyrics first. I tend to build out the lyrics as completely as possible, and then I'll bring in a chord structure that fits the intended song emotion, the lyrics and the sung melody lines to bring it all together. It's a magical experience - a very creative process.

It's like trying to put together a puzzle without knowing what it's supposed to look like or how it should come together. You are pulling bits and pieces of ideas that are floating in the air and piecing it together in a creative way that eventually builds a beautiful final result. I absolutely love the process.

Which of your songs is your absolute favorite?

I've written quite a number of songs, but the song that resonates most with me is one called "Kiss it Better". It's a really sweet song and has a great message with a deeper connection for many people. People tell me that the song is relatable to them, which I really appreciate.

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

I really want to play live more than I have. My music performance has slowed down a bit since COVID, but I hope to become more active playing in the community very soon. I also want to begin sharing my own music more frequently so that others can hear and feel the messages that are shared.

And of course, I plan to continue writing more music to share. I would LOVE to hear one of my songs on the radio one day!

What else are you involved in within the community?

I have been giving guitar lessons and other coaching opportunities within music over the past few years. This has led to some spectacular experiences in building relationships with other rising musicians, learning more about music myself, and growing as an individual. I also feel that I became a better guitar player myself once becoming a guitar teacher. While I'm not formally trained as a guitar teacher or on the guitar, I had to go back to the basics and figure out why I play the guitar this way or that way. I may not have all the music theory and formal guitar training, but it's helped me to teach a different approach to other musicians, and they seem to like it.

It's been a great joy working with the young people who are passionate about something, and they are really adding magic to this world.

What other interests do you have outside of music?

My wife and I spend a lot of time with our grandchildren, who also live in Utah County. My son and I are big fans of the San Francisco 49ers, and we enjoy watching football games together. Really, we are pretty typical and enjoy spending times indoor and outdoor with family and friends.



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

Focus on fun. If you are having fun, everyone around you will also be having fun.

MUSIC | INFO LINKS



Spotify
"You Do You"
Written by: Jim Inglese
Sung by: Andrea Sharp



Spotify
"You're the Only One"
Written by: Jim Inglese
Sung by: Sheridan Liaw