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ASHLEY JORDAN

# Born to be a singer

By John Quinn Rowland  
Illustration by [Name]



**W**hen Ashley Jordan first sang in front of an audience it was clear she belonged on a stage.

Her stage presence and her voice captivated the audience and it dawned on her that performing might be what she was meant to do for the rest of her life.

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"I wanted to play and sing at the same time," she said. The endless studying, consuming hours of her time, didn't deter her at all, because she had her goal set.

Including second place in the Sam and Betty and participating in the American Music and Talent Competition in 2010 in Phoenix, Arizona, instruments and instruments. At 11, Ashley started writing her own songs and became a regular on the music circuit. Her first gig was at the Blue Room in Harvard, long known for attracting great performers. She recently released her first CD, Simple Love, and one of her songs has been picked by the Play Station for inclusion in a feature movie. She is scheduled to perform with 11 other young performers selected from nine states at "Music On the Hill" at the Harvard Club in Boston on Tuesday, March 23. Although it has been several years, it is through

## SINGER

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Ashley's determination and hard work that she has gotten so far.

The feeling of performing and singing in front of others, of connecting with people through music, is something Ashley wants to do for the rest of her life. She works at her craft consistently, driven by the desire to make music well.

"I write and compose music," she said. "It is sort of an escape for me. I write about things in my life. I am in high school, so there is a lot of material there."

With titles like Jesus Taylor, Killa Paul and Taylor Swift, Ashley leans toward the folk music sound but gives the music a fresh spin. Her original tunes are all from her life. And even if no one in her family recognizes what is called her music - is it folk/pop/rock/musical/contemporary rock? - her music is all her own.

"I just say it is Ashley music," she says.

Ashley started out like any other kid - goofing off with the family's new karaoke machine. Her performance in the talent show, singing an Aerosmith song, gave her great feedback and a real desire to continue. She slowly made her way into the world of music, learning with her parents as they went.

"She leads the way and we kind of assist," said Trent with a laugh.

Ashley collaborated with former Harvard resident and musician Peter Massimo who let her record his original songs. They would perform together with Ashley singing and Massimo on guitar. But then Ashley realized she didn't want to have to depend on someone else to play guitar for her. Ashley took some lessons and then studied on her own, using Internet sites to learn basic chords and then playing those chords over and over until she got them right.

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Ashley Jordan, musician  
For information visit ashleyjordan.com

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Performing does not really make her nervous, even if she is usually the youngest performer in any given line up.

"I want to be able to get out and have people hear my music," she said, noting that she especially likes it when the audience understands a song. "I appreciate it when people can connect with the music."

The toughest part of being a young musician with a full high school schedule isn't trying to balance everything, she said, it is the waiting to perform.



Singer, songwriter and high school student Ashley Jordan. Photo: [Name]

She can write a verse at 7 p.m. and not be scheduled to perform until 10 or 11 that night.

"I just don't like waiting that long," she said.

School sports have been the only real thing she had to let go because of the time commitments involved.

With full support from her parents, both new to the professional musician themselves, Ashley is considering a dual enrollment for her final year of high school in which she could take some of the classes, possibly classes at the New England Conservatory, and receive college credit and receive a few college years, too.

The chance to keep her own path, after seeing Boston musician John Gerardo perform several times, Ashley took the bold move after one of his performances and asked if he would teach her guitar. That started a mentoring relationship that has helped Ashley navigate everything from writing song manuscripts to setting up gigs to making a CD.

"I've been performing for 18 or 19 years," said Gerardo, "and she is as good as it comes. She has an amazing voice."

"Music is the main part of my life," said Ashley. "When everything is going on it is the one thing I can do."

