THURSDAY, MARCH 1
TELEGRAM & GAZET

Your guide to the weekend ahead

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COVER STORY

Pursuing a dream

Harvard teen releases CD

By Paula J. Owen

Seventeen-year-old Ashley Joelle Jordan has been splitting her time between school and par

HARVARD — With her mom and dad as road crew, 17-year-old musician Ashley Joelle Jordan is juggling high school responsibilities with late-night gigs — and loving every minute of it.

Ashley said it can be tough coming home at 1:30 a.m. and getting up at 6 a.m. to go to school. She's a junior at The Bromfield School in Harvard.

But Ashley said it would be much tougher on her without the support of her parents — her biggest fans.

"My parents are really supportive," she said. "Balancing my music with high school is really difficult, and trying to manage everything has been really hard. At open mics, when you're performing, they put you on a list and you might not perform until really late. That doesn't work out for me because I have to get home and go to bed."

Her mother, Terri J. Jordan, 50, runs a consulting firm with Ashley's father, Chris A. Jordan, 51. When not working, Mrs. Jordan is helping her daughter with public relations. She also helped design her daughter's Web site, www.AshleyJoelleMusic.com.

Mrs. Jordan said her daughter "has been "artsy" since she was 3.

"She announced she was going to sing and she put a mic in her hand," Mrs. Jordan said. "She started photography, graphic arts, but music was always her thing."

Her other children, Derek G. Jordan, 25, a firefighter and emergency medical technician studying to be a paramedic, and Travis J. Jordan, 18, a freshman taking psychometry at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, are not into performing and music like Ashley is, said Mrs. Jordan. Ashley, she said, was always singing and always says about what she wanted to do.

"Grant's father died when Ashley was only 4 or 5," she said. "She had this amazing connection with him. He was a singer and songwriter and played guitar and harmonica. Their connection was so unique, we always say Ashley's talent and love for music somehow passed through him to her."

She said Ashley is looking into dual enrollment at a college during her senior year, but really wants to pursue her music full time.

"She wants to really pursue her music in the next year," Mrs. Jordan said. "We're supportive in doing that. She wants to do things differently and go in her direction. We're big on education, but support her. We're like the ultimate parent fans and go to every gig."

> "It's rough balancing it with high school, but it's here and I'm focusing on my music now."
> ASHLEY JOELLE JORDAN

Mrs. Jordan described her daughter as the "typical artist" — not very good with organization of dates and scheduling.

Usually the youngest performer at open mic nights, Ashley said when she walks in with her parents, people are "pretty confused."

"My dad is carrying my guitar, and people ask him where he wants to be on the list and then he tells them, 'She's performing,'" she said, laughing.

She and her parents say they have met some "pretty amazing" musicians and people along the way, willing to help Ashley pursue her dream, including musician John Gerard — Ashley's mentor — and producer Stephen Rapson, who helped produce Ashley's first CD "Simple Love," released last month.

"Ashley is a sophisticated writer for her age, but there are literally thousands of 17-year-old sophisticated writers out there," said Mr. Rapson. "Whether she moves to the next level is the luck of the draw, but she definitely has what it takes to move to higher levels in music. One of the benefits of being young is you go after it with all the enthusiasm that is required. When you're older, you know all the obstacles, and it tends to slow you down."

The first song on Ashley's CD is about all kinds of love, Ashley explained.

"I really like to try to connect with people," Ashley said. "The first song on the CD is about any kind of love — it could be a relationship with a family member and wanting things to go your way, but that's just not how it is."

Her music is also a release for her, she says. The song "Throw" is about a girl who had "kind of been bullying and harassing" her at school, she says. Though she doesn't name the girl in the song, it helped her cope with the problem.

"I take those feelings and put it in a song," she said. "Lately there has been a lot of bullying in the [illegible] at open mics and peo[illegible] it's a way of dealing [illegible]

Ashley's music [illegible] there at open mics [illegible] are there there. "[illegible] invited to Play Fi[illegible] gig for its first ev[illegible] here Film set to feat[illegible]

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Her songs are also [illegible] on some indie stations [illegible]

"I love doing this [illegible] rough balancing it w[illegible] it's here and I'm focu[illegible] now. I'm not really a