

Mp3 Jason Wanner - Nature Boy



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A crisp splash of cold water on the morning face of the exhausted musical world; a fun yet innovative approach to classic jazz and new original songs, something for everyone. 15 MP3 Songs JAZZ:

Traditional Jazz Combo, EASY LISTENING: Crooners/Vocals Details: Jason Lee Wanner was born on February 1st, 1978 in Sacramento, CA. Even at such a young age, he was constantly exposed to many different kinds of music. Although neither of his parents were musicians, they were obvious fans of many musical styles, and so this love was of course bestowed upon their son everyday. Before he could even walk and talk, he received many daily doses of everything from classic country, to folk, classic rock, doo-wop, big band, ragtime, modern jazz, Sousa marches, Strauss waltzes, polka, motown; anyway the list goes on and on. By the time he was 3 or 4 years old, Jason was playing by ear his Uncle Richard's organ at Grandma's house. Simplistic 4-year-old versions of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor and Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" started to make his parents wonder. The only thing that seemed to be missing was exposure to the modern music of the day. When Jason started kindergarten, he was a bit "behind" his classmates as far as musical tastes go. He had heard very little music from the 80's at home, but it didn't take him long to start enjoying that as well. It was during this time when one day would change his life forever. One day at school, the students were required to get their fingerprints taken, and the woman taking Jason's commented on how he had "the fingers of a piano player." Well, Jason already knew that he loved the piano, so he went home and told his parents. They asked if he was interested in taking lessons, to which he replied, "Yeah, I wanna play!" The lessons began around Jason's 6th birthday, when his parents used what little money they had to get him a piano: a Kohler spinet that he still plays to this day. The first year was difficult trying to find the right teacher. Some couldn't give Jason enough to do, some purposefully gave him too little to do. Finally, a long-time mentor was found in Dan

Lofing, who decided to experiment with Jason by skipping traditional methods and jumping directly into classical training. Jason recalls, "For the first year-and-a-half to two years, I refused to learn how to read music because I much preferred to play by ear. It worked out very well because I would ask my teacher to play my lessons for me before I took them home, and I would remember and figure them out, PRETENDING to read the music of course. It didn't last for very long, though, because as the pieces grew in difficulty, Dan started to realize that I wasn't playing exactly what was written." For the next 6 years, Jason was practicing classical and ragtime piano for his lessons, learning some of the more popular songs on his own, and wanting so much to be like Vince Guaraldi because he loved the music from the Peanuts cartoons. "I hated practicing! Those were the longest half-hour and one-hour stints of my life. I wanted to sit and play Charlie Brown stuff all day instead. That's what all my friends liked to hear me play." Jason began to feel his love growing for jazz. This was fueled every year when his dad would take him to the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee. At the age of 12, he finally got his chance to learn how to play jazz when he attended his first year at the STJS Trad Jazz Camp. Two well-known jazz pianists, Johnny Varro and "K.O." Ecklund, took Jason under their wings and taught him the way. Jason began to feel the freedom that he had been looking for since he was 4. When he came back from camp, his parents barely recognized him. Needless to say, the foundation of a soaring career started to take hold, and things began to happen to him. He joined up with The New Traditionalists (TNT), a trad jazz combo for young musicians, and was finally performing in the same festival his dad had taken him to so many years as a spectator. TNT became Crushed Red Pepper, and later became Timeless Tradition. Jason was playing gigs at restaurants and bars with his friends as well as by himself. All the while he was going to high school, playing in 3 of its bands, working as the rehearsal pianist for the spring musical, and still maintaining good grades. In 1996, Jason graduated from high school, and, now 18, moved to Los Angeles to attend USC's prestigious music program. What happened next suddenly brought all of this momentum grinding to a halt. Jason remembers, "The musicians at USC were absolutely outstanding. I started to realize that I wasn't the only one doing what I was doing. There were a whole lot of other people doing it too, and a whole lot better than me. That scared me. Plus, I found out that my scholarships were not going to be renewed. So at the end of one year, I moved back home again with my tail between my legs. Everyone thought I was still gone, so no one was calling for gigs or anything. I just wanted to quit." It was in the middle of this year-long despair, when something magical happened. Jason received a call

from the people who run the Sun Valley Swing and Dixie Jamboree in Idaho. They had heard him perform in Mammoth Lakes, CA the summer before he left for USC. They wanted him to appear as a guest artist. Jason immediately said yes, and in October of '97 in Sun Valley, ID Jason could feel the magic flowing once again. "That was where I met the Blue Street guys. I had known Sherri-Lynn from back when I first went to jazz camp. They were looking for a steady piano player, and it seemed like the perfect match for me. I had always wanted to play with that band, and as a teenager had told myself that someday, I would. In February of '98, I got the call. Everything has sort of taken off all over again from that point." Jason is since performing with Blue Street, pursuing a Bachelor of Music in classical piano performance, enjoying a hobby in photography, composing and arranging for a variety of shows, films, and recordings, and every once in a while he puts together his 11-piece swing band, Swing Syndicate, which is mostly a fun reunion with old friends, but a killer group. He has also taken his mentors' places as an instructor at the same jazz camp he attended as a student. "I want to give back to those who have done so much for me. I want to be as versatile as possible, and learn something new every day of my life. So far it has been more wonderful than I could possibly have imagined."

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