

Mp3 Jared Rehberg - Waking Up American



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This is Universal Folk Pop. I combine modern Folk guitar riffs, raw passionate vocals and modern beats. I write songs with pop music chord progressions and words with universal appeal. 10 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Pop, POP: Folk Pop Details: "The Birth of Universal Folk Pop" My friend Jared Rehberg asked me to write a bio on him. I thought it would be easy. No sweat. I'd interview him and edit it and make a nice, neat package. But I found out it's not so easy. The things that I think are important about Jared don't come out in a neat package. I can give you the facts. He was born somewhere around Saigon, sometime in 1974. From piecing together his early days, he believes he was sent to An Lac Orphanage, where he arrived at only a few weeks old. He says he owes an immense debt of gratitude to Betty Tisdale ("the angel of Saigon"), who used all her resources to run An Lac Orphanage along with Madame Ngai. Madame Ngai named him Vu Tien Anh. Vu was her family name, so all the children took her name. From there, he was flown to the U.S., where he stayed at an army hospital in Ft. Benning, Georgia, until he was feeling better. He was then released to his adoptive American parents. And the rest, as they say, is history. Jared was one of the lucky ones. Of the more than 2,000 children coming to America to find new homes, many of the children involved in "Operation Babylift" never made it to the U.S. at all. One of the planes crashed. He says, "It was the C5, a big plane -- kind of like the Titanic, it was never supposed to crash. It landed in a rice paddy during that special week, and many of the children died, some people who were watching the children died, too. It was such a tragic event -- they were so close to starting a new life in America. And they never made it." This is one of Jared's main reasons for being a musician. "I'm just trying to live that American dream myself. To all my Vietnamese adoptee friends, my brothers and sisters out there, to crew members on my plane from Vietnam, I just want to let them know that I'm doing alright. And thank them every day ... and my parents that I grew up with, it's for them, too, because they let me

be what I wanted to be, and follow my dreams. So I'm a reflection of them, too." Any bio must start here because this simple statement reveals so much of Jared's spirit of optimism and generosity. He could dwell on the hardships and difficulties of finding himself a fish out of water, of growing up different. He could dwell on the results of early malnutrition which has given him difficulty in concentration that has dogged him through school. But maybe, just maybe, that handicap has its own counterpoint in a special musical ability. He says, "In some ways, I've opened up new channels, new gateways, for other people who have a normal balanced mind." You think you know your friends, but it's always fun to find out something new. For instance, I didn't realize that guitar was not his first instrument. At an early age, he learned violin, French horn and alto saxophone. I've even seen him play piano, though he's never had a lesson. In high school, he picked up the guitar, and developed his own unique style -- developed from the very disability that might have set him back. As he put it, "I couldn't memorize the current pop songs, so I gave up learning cover songs and I focused on writing my own music. And I think that helped me out in the long run.... When I strum, or when I hang onto a chord, or when I bend a note, it's always remaining true to my own sound." His sound. His voice. His words. And thus, we come to that which I most associate with my friend, Jared Rehberg. He is an independent thinker. You never know what is going to come out of his mouth. He has a natural charisma, a natural authority, enhanced by an ability to see things from a unique viewpoint. I ask him when he became interested in being Vietnamese and what part it played in his self image. He says, "For the most part, I spent my childhood and teen years pushing it away, because I wanted to be like everybody else around me. I think it was a combination of things ... one of my best friends passed away - Jeffery Yu. He was Chinese. Growing up, he was one of my only outlets to the Asian community. I used to eat his Mom's egg rolls and talk about Asian things. When he passed away, it made me think about how long or short my life could be, and the other part of the combination was going down to Baltimore to a Viet adoptee reunion where I got an opportunity to meet other Viet adoptees and hear other childhood stories from people involved in Operation Babylift. I was able to learn a little bit more about my culture. I first fell in love with the people, and then the culture." "There was always a battle growing up, because at a young age, sometimes my voice didn't mesh -- with the society, the media, you know. When I saw people on the street that looked like me, sometimes I did want to stop and ask them what it was like." It wasn't until June of 2002 that he had the opportunity to go back to Vietnam, and to satisfy an old debt. "I love the people that walked the same path as me. And I also love

the people who made sacrifices in their lives to make sure I'm alive today. And for them, I wanted to make that special journey to the motherland, because I know that they hoped their hard work would allow me to have a better life in America. And that someday I could go back and visit the culture that I did not experience growing up. Somehow I had to go back and find that balance." The trip was momentous. He came back with photographs, stories -- and new songs. He talked about the experience of visiting an orphanage, of seeing the places he might have been as a baby. I wondered if someday he could ever live there. "I think parts of Hanoi or Saigon. I'd have to learn the language and get used to the food. But I'm an American, I have American habits and American tastes. And for the same reason that I wouldn't want to live in Florida. A nice place to go on vacation, something to look forward to -- something to remain special." Jared says, "I really want to show people that culture is a beautiful thing - whether you're born into it or had to create it for yourself. For someone who didn't have that crutch to fall back on ... For someone like myself who didn't have a good cultural identity ... Growing up, the Asian community at first didn't really embrace me because I wasn't raised in their culture. There were open-minded friends who gave me love. I've taken the time now to study and learn about my culture, but I really found a comfort in just being me. I look forward to creating my own culture." So, he wants to touch people through his music, maybe be an Asian pop star on TRL (Total Request Live on MTV), maybe do a whole musical score for a movie. The whole rock star dream. And meanwhile, he's just writing songs to express what he feels. I ask him, "What kind of music do you like to write? What is your goal of your art, and where do you want to go with this?" He says, "I want to write songs that people can relate to. I want to introduce Universal Folk Pop to the world ... I want to write a song to my mother and father, a song to my brother and sister, a song to my grandparents -- a song about the experience of growing up, the experience of being out here in this world. People are in such a rush to go from one place to another, they don't stop and think about what they just experienced. They just missed a beautiful sunset, or they just missed an embrace of two people at an airport -- and if I can help fill in that missing experience, or if I can supply that image that they missed, somehow I feel that I can offer them a vision. The challenge is to put it to music, music so good that it makes them raise their arms. But it's a rewarding challenge." I ask, "Do you ever see yourself getting married?" "Yeah. I think I look forward to getting married to that person who understands me and my life. I've had enough relationships to know just how important it is to live your own life. That's why I chose to be a musician and to venture in this direction, because I realized I have found something that I

love to do. It's something that I love just as much as loving someone else. And something that gives me love in return. Real love. A solid foundation and the opportunity to share my stories." Trying to wind up this interview with something philosophical, I ask, "Who are you?" "Who am I?" (Long pause). "I'm the luckiest guy in the world. I gotta be ... right? I get up in the morning, and this is my mantra ... I have all my limbs, check. I have good eyesight, check. I can hear, check. I'm not ugly, check. Nothing's broken, check. I have a great job, check. I have friends, check. Someday I will be in love (fingers crossed), check. Yeah, in general, I have to remain positive." Being positive. Laughing or crying. If you want to know what that means, all you have to do is listen to Jared's music. Copyright 2002 Stirling Davenport

----- Stirling Davenport lives in Norwalk, Connecticut and writes poetry and fiction. Her collection of short stories called "Amphibious Dreamers" was published in 2000 by Xlibris (also available at Amazon.com). Her short story "Abba's Mark" was published in 1998 by Design-Image Group in a vampire anthology called "The Darkest Thirst." Several of her stories have appeared in on-line markets. Her website home.att.net/stirlings is a changing collage of poetry, travel photos, journal entries, articles and experimental work. An artist and writer, Stirling has taught creative fiction, been interviewed on local television, run art therapy workshops, taught art to children, and written software. She is a member of the 6' Ferret Writers' Group, holds a B.A. from University of Massachusetts, and honors in Literature and Visual Arts from State University of New York at Purchase. Copyright 2002 Jared Rehberg Website created by Cometsong 2002

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