

Mp3 Jasmine Whenham - 1:37 Am



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Jasmine reaches in and holds her listeners tight, from the inside out. She makes us listen. Eyes open, she makes us feel. Eyes closed. She carries us through her journey. We remember our own. 10 MP3 Songs POP: Folkly Pop, FOLK: Progressive Folk Details: So there I was at thirteen years old, already painfully aware that I didnt belong in my peer group. Whether it was the dorky glasses, the second-hand, different clothes, my familys vegetarian lifestyle, my awkward, gangly height, the nose I hadnt grown into, or the fact that said nose was usually stuck in a book, I was clearly and markedly different from all the rest. Certainly not in a good way. At eighteen, I missed the first two days of college, as I was sure my experience with my peers would be the same. On day three, I showed up to my Theatre Design class (trying to be as invisible as possible, of course) to find that I had walked into a room full of kindred spirits: freaks and other social rejects. Months later, I shared with a classmate the alienation that I had anticipated and he responded, Of course you were afraid. We all were, but thats what this college thing is all about. We are here to find out who we really are. At the time I thought I was going to have myself totally figured out by graduation. So funny. I graduated from college in April of 1999 and less than four months later, I had a position of high responsibility, teaching and stage managing at another college. It didnt take me long to realize that not only did I not fit into this kind of social structure, but I didnt even like what I was doing anymore. It took a lot longer before I could admit to myself that I had educated myself in the wrong field and that I needed to make a change. With the exclusion of the work that I did in theatre, I have also worked as a nanny, a gas attendant, a service clerk, a housekeeper, a telephone surveyor, a census worker, a security supervisor, a greenhouse laborer, and a baker. I have been laid off, fired, asked to leave quietly and of my own accord, and/or told to consider more suitable employment. I have had the good sense to quit once or twice, too. Every time I found myself looking through the help wanted

ads again, I would go through intense periods of self analysis. There was always a sense that I was supposed to be doing something that I wasn't. My brain was continuously and relentlessly asking me, what are you doing with your life? to which I would respond, I have no idea what am I supposed to be doing? My big question was answered finally, when I realized that through all the years of searching for something to pour myself into, I had always been guided, cajoled, and consoled by my first true love: music. It's like the stories that you hear about people being best friends for years before exploring intimacy with each other. My parents are both classically trained, university-educated musicians and music has always had the place at the head of the dining room table, if you know what I mean. Music has been my best friend, my constant companion, and my love for as long as I can remember, and yet I had never considered it as a means of gainful employment. At the end of my first paid gig, I remember saying to my brother (another musician), Wow. We just played some songs and they gave us money just for that! To this day, that still seems a little weird to me. In the spring of 2003, I continued my post-secondary education, but not in any sort of conventional way. I began working with Lin Elder, my manager/ mentor/ producer/ friend. Her belief in me, my voice, and my songs proved to be just the motivation I needed to progress from shy, insecure, sings-in-her-livingroom Jasmine to the slightly-less-shy, not-quite-so-intimidated, learning-and-growing-as-a-songwriter-and-performer-every-day Jasmine Of Today. She continues to push me forward in music and life and someday I hope to be able to buy her a villa in the south of France where she can record and produce to her heart's content. The songs I write will seem sad at times, but there is universality within sadness and comfort in the knowledge that healing is inevitable with perseverance. Sometimes I feel as though I am not writing about anything of substance, or that I should be using my songs to convey a political or social message to change the world or something. I have such admiration for activist/ artists like Ani DiFranco, Bruce Cockburn, Jonatha Brooke, Woody Guthrie, and Bob Dylan (to name a few from a list of hundreds) that live true to their political convictions and use their art to affect change in the world. However, I have been equally inspired by artists like Annie Lennox, Sting, Jason Mraz, Gwen Stefani, Ben Folds, and Joni Mitchell. In my mind, these artists bring listeners to an emotional threshold where self examination and introspection are not only inevitable, but necessary. I am sure this creates change in the world, as well: one person at a time. So here I am now, at twenty six. I have learned that learning truly is life long and the rate at which we progress as people is entirely dependent on our own motivation and determination. I have embraced the aspects of myself that

make me different and I have learned that nothing about myself or my experience of life is unique to the point that I am alone in the world. I have found that I am the most honest person I know. I have found that this quality always serves me well and telling my truth moves others to tell their own. I have a wonderful network of family, friends, and acquaintances and I have finally found a world in which I belong. It was so worth waiting for. My job is to sing about what I feel and think and to inspire others to feel and think for themselves. I will always be nervous when I am standing up there, playing the first bars of my first song, but when I sing the first line and I feel all the discontentment rolling off of me in waves, I am home and I can say, firmly and definitively, This is what Im supposed to be doing.

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