

Jacob Johnson Biography

187 Words

Since dropping out of college in 2007, Jacob Johnson has journeyed across the country in six minivans (so far), captivating audiences with his highly caffeinated brand of acoustic guitar playing. Known for his energetic performances, Jacob has had the privilege of sharing the stage with Grammy winners like Tommy Emmanuel, and Victor Wooten, as well as esteemed musicians including Phil Keaggy, Marcus King, and Tim Reynolds.

Beyond his guitar prowess, Jacob has proven himself as a talented songwriter, garnering recognition as the Don Gibson Songwriter Award Grand Prize Winner, Nashville Connection Songwriter of the Year, and a Finalist for the Freshgrass No Depression Songwriter Award. His ability to craft captivating and heartfelt songs has earned him performances at prestigious music festivals such as the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival in New York, the Walnut Valley Festival in Kansas, the Wildflower Music Festival in Texas, and countless others.

Jacob currently resides in Greenville, SC with his wife Jessica. In addition to his busy touring schedule, Jacob is an adjunct guitar faculty member at North Greenville University. Yes, that is the college he dropped out of.

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527 words

To watch Jacob Johnson play guitar is to watch someone do what he was born to do. Johnson glides up and down the fretboard with total confidence in a way that reminds one of Leo Kottke, barely looking at the instrument as he weaves delicate, dazzling melody lines with the occasional percussive thump on the strings. His sense of melody is as strong as his virtuosic playing, and his songwriting reveals a modestly bemused look at the world.

Johnson began playing when he was 10 years old, thanks primarily to his grandmother. "She played with pickup bands back in the '40s," he says. "When country acts would tour, they would just book a band in whatever city they were playing in. So she played with Ernest Tubb and Hank Snow and a lot of people like that. She taught me the first three or four chords I ever learned and said, 'Jacob, if all you ever learn on the guitar is these three or four chords, you will always be able to pick up a guitar and play songs for people.'"

After that initial introduction, Johnson says he progressed quickly through his teen years. "There was a period of a couple of years where I went from zero to 60. I started out listening to Johnny Cash and then got into the old rockabilly like Carl Perkins and Gene Vincent, then it was the blues and Stevie Ray Vaughan, Clapton, and Hendrix. I guess by the time I was 18 or 19 I'd started getting into Phil Keaggy and Michael Hedges, who I consider the Jimi Hendrix of the acoustic guitar.

He was one of the first players who got into two-handed tapping, alternate tuning, that kind of stuff. At a certain point I decided to focus on the acoustic guitar because there was just something about it. It seemed like this was the instrument that was going to give me my voice; that would allow me to develop my singing and songwriting in a way that my electric playing didn't."

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