Jamey Heath

Wouldn't it be cool if you and your cousins sang on an award-winning music album together? That's what happened to Jamey Heath at age 10. Since his dad is a musician, Jamey often spent time in a recording studio. With his family and friends, he recorded the album *Happy Ayyám-i-Há*.

At 13, Jamey started playing in bands, and by 14 he was earning money. Since then, he's built a successful career as a composer and studio producer. He's supported the work of artists such as Gladys Knight and companies such as Disney and SoulPancake.

In 2013, Jamey released a Bahá'í-inspired album called *I Have Returned to Thee*. He loves being of service, so you may meet him at Bahá'í conferences in California, Wisconsin, and anywhere he's asked to share his talents. Jamey and his family currently live in Los Angeles, California.

Q: What's your favorite childhood memory?

A: One of my . . . memories . . . is traveling with the [Bahá'í Youth] workshop. We went all around the country and to Canada as well . . . and I got to build some amazing friendships . . . and got to learn the value of service . . . [Those were] some good, good, amazing times in my life, for sure.

Q: What was your most challenging experience as a kid, and how did you handle it?

A: School . . . I was so distracted with music, and so I made a deal with my parents that if I could get . . . into this music college . . . in 10th grade instead of going to school, I would go to this music college. And you had to be 18 to get in, [but] I got accepted . . . I left school and went straight to music college.

Left: Jamey (back row, fifth from left), age 15, was part of the Bahá'í Youth Workshop from Los Angeles, California, that traveled to Kansas to perform in 1985. **Right:** Every summer, the L.A. workshop "was like my full-time life — being of service . . ." says Jamey.

Q: What inspired you to choose a career in music?

A: I was raised in a musical family . . . The studio that my family owned also had living quarters, and school was right there, so I spent all my time in the studio. And I just kind of always knew how to do it. I always had an instrument in my hand . . . It was playing piano, guitar, but really it was producing. I always had a knack for technology and recording and arranging. I was always interested in accessing music and taking it apart, trying to put it back together with some new elements.

Questions and Answers with an Inspirational Bahá'í

Left: Jamey performed at the Los Angeles Bahá'í Center in 2013. He starts his Bahá'í performances with singing a prayer. **Right:** Jamey married Natasha in 2013 in California. With them are Jamey's children, Nakhjavani and Jazmin (right).

Q: What qualities do you think are most important for a successful musician?

A: Being prolific. Really, really writing a lot of things . . . Just keep grinding away and not have one or two . . . songs, but have many, many pieces of music . . . You don't take one dart at a time and try to hit the bullseye. You grab 10 darts . . . and you throw all of them at the dart board . . . It's a much better chance of getting one to stick . . .

Use your music to be of service . . . Learn how to collaborate and work with people, because everyone is connected to something, and there's so much to learn from other people. And learning from other people also opens doors for yourself when that wouldn't otherwise maybe happen.

Q: What can kids do to help build unity in their communities?

A: Being involved in junior youth programs for sure . . . Not just hanging out . . . doing something with purpose. [And] . . . I think [doing] sports . . . I've noticed that when my son is involved . . . he makes friends in so many different . . . areas outside of our own because of sports—the camaraderie that [it] brings.

Q: Do you ever feel nervous before you perform? If so, what do you do?

A: No . . . Maybe it's because most of it is service-oriented, so it's like . . . I'm with God at the moment . . . Some of the conferences I do—what I always do when I go up is . . . do a short prayer . . . . So I can just humble myself and stay connected. So maybe that's part of why the nerves aren't really there . . . I'm always starting with a prayer.

Q: What are virtues that you admire in other people?

A: When . . . people express themselves, express love for other people. I admire when I hear other people say "I love you" instead of "love you," when they use the word "I." You know, just that they are able to be vulnerable . . . And honesty. When I was a kid, honesty was something that I had to . . . work hard on.

Q: From your experience, do you have advice for kids who want to be professional musicians someday?

A: One of the things that I tell a lot of people that I work with . . . is to absolutely learn how to . . . connect . . . People hire people that they like . . . It just goes back to being good to people, and actually be invested in who they are . . . It really requires knowing people and, you know, knowing how to get along with people.

Photos: Portrait by Natasha Heath, performance by Emmerson Boergadine, wedding by Carlo Alberto Orecchia