



Jayme Lewis

TBC: Jayme, thanks for helping us kick off the first issue of The Bass Café.

JL: It's my honor and extreme pleasure to be involved here.

TBC: You're a busy bassist; recording, touring, producing, running [The Lewis Academy of Music](#), [Ignite Musical Training](#), [LA Bass Lix](#), and a steady schedule of church services. Can you tell us about the Music Academy, Ignite, and Bass Lix?



JL: Ya, I try to stay as busy as I can because you never can tell where this business is going to take you. My uncle told me once that if you're not swimming, you're not in deep enough. I've always taken this advice as the central core of my business, but I'm always careful to make sure I'm swimming and not drowning! The Lewis Music Academy is a music school that I own and operate along with my mother, father, and brother. Located in Moorpark, CA we have just over 550 students that come in for lessons every week. LA Bass Lix is an online bass curriculum that allows people outside of my local circle to study with me, featuring an online lesson library of over 100 bass lessons. And Ignite is really just a series of ear-training courses that I developed for myself, only recently making it available to the public after much demand.

TBC: You have a phenomenal band backing you on 'When Will Then Be Now'. Can you tell us more about them?

JL: Those guys are some of my favorite players to work with these days. That's my brother, Jason, on guitar, Sean Massey on keys, and Tim Boone on the drums. I've worked with my brother for my entire life; literally every musical project since the age of three. Being brothers and having so much experience together, he's the easiest guy for me to play with because I



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know exactly what he's going to do. Sean and Tim are two of my favorite players that I've worked with a lot over the years, usually doing worship or pop gigs. I also have a strong familiarity with their playing styles, and I rely on that trust a lot when I'm writing tunes.

TBC: You've made your CD 'When Will Then Be Now' available for download with a 'name your price' option. 'When Will Then Be Now' also comes with complete transcription in standard notation and tab, as well as all play-along tracks for the entire record. What motivates you to give to the bass community in such a generous manner?

JL: I know that I personally enjoy seeing the music on paper while I listen to it. It helps me to rationalize everything that's going on while providing some insight to the artist's thought process. Doing your own transcriptions is great too (and I highly recommend it), but I love it when someone else does the work for me! But the real reason why I offer the transcriptions is because the work has already been done. Typically, my music begins on paper. More often than not I will write music away from any instrument and then learn how to play it later, as was the case with the song Sedagive (which was written entirely while I was on my honeymoon in Greece, after 17 days without access to my bass). This form of composition keeps me from falling into any habitual constraints that my fingers may force upon me, causing me to rely solely on my ear and to concentrate on the music itself. I'll do this with almost everything: chord progressions and voicings, melodies, riffs, solos... So my thought is that since the music is notated already, I might as well give everyone access to it, right?

TBC: What's the meaning behind the CD's title?

JL: Actually, each track on the record is named after a line from a Mel Brooks movie. The title, When Will Then Be Now, is from Spaceballs. Sedagive, Abby Someone, and Put the Candle Back are from Young Frankenstein, both The Sheriff is Near and Why Do I Always Get a Warped One come from Blazing Saddles, and Fork Found is a line in Dracula: Dead and Loving It. I always find it funny trying to name an instrumental song so I just watched all my favorite Mel Brooks movies in one day and jotted down the coolest lines.

TBC: In 2011 you toured with worship leaders Matt Bayless and Ben Kolarcik. The tours led to the creation of your book, 'Advice for the Worship Musician'. What was your inspiration?

JL: After doing so much worship music and music clinics over the years (especially in that summer, in particular), I got kind of tired of saying the same things over and over again. I've worked with countless musicians in my career, and even more inside the church. Over the years, quite often at least one person on the worship team would ask me, "What do you think I need to work on?" And my answer was always the same – Hundreds of times I was saying the same thing over and over again. Also, I started to notice that the players who were getting all the work were doing the same things, or had the same musical attitudes and habits. So I put them all down on paper. When someone asks the same question nowadays I can just say, "Read



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this. It's all in there!" Of course the contents of the book don't pertain strictly to church players, but the advice could be adapted to any genre of modern music.

TBC: You were fortunate to study with some heavyweight bassist. How did that experience contribute to your playing style?

JL: Above anything else it inspired me, and continues to inspire me, to do what I do. When I was about 16 years old I started college as an English major pursuing a career as a writer (I guess I ended up being one anyway!). I had always enjoyed music but never thought that I had what it takes to do it professionally. I switched to studying music at the University once I met Victor Wooten. Guys like Vic and Anthony Wellington helped me to realize that I needed to make this my livelihood, and that you can develop the 'what it takes' portion later. And studying the styles and sounds of so many great players has helped me to find my own, in essence.

TBC: How were you able to develop your own voice on bass?

JL: I guess I never stopped studying. When I was eight years old I learned every single bass line from Mike Dirnt of Green Day. At the age of 11 I fell in love with the way Roger Manganelli from Less Than Jake could dance a million notes around a simple chord progression. I've always adored the way that Switchfoot's Timothy Foreman could play such melodic bass lines without conflicting with the vocal melody. Beethoven did unspeakable things (for his day) with the bass, and Brahms really understood the majestic power that the lowest pitch can impart upon the rest of the harmony. Guys like Stanley, Jaco, Marcus, and Victor demonstrated how the bass doesn't need to take the back seat, and cats like Jamerson and "Duck" Dunn showed me the importance of a simple groove. I could keep going down the line, but each player has influenced me and developed my understanding of the bass. To this day I can hear all of their influences in "my sound," and perhaps many more than I can even think of.

TBC: You've reached a place so many other musicians would love to be and that's as a working musician. Any advice for others on how to accomplish making a living playing music?

JL: You have to be creative and you need to understand that there's more to it than "just playing music." You need to be more than a bass player, because that won't pay your bills on it's own (or at least not mine). Not to say that you need a "day job," but you will need to supplement your income in more ways than one. And if you're creative, you can figure out how to do this within the vein of music. If I could divide my work time into percentages, I'd say that 5-10% or less of it is anything related to actually playing some music. The rest of it is making phone calls, answering emails, trying out new ideas, marketing, planning, managing, booking, designing, setting up, tearing down, driving... You will spend so much time finding or creating the gig that you won't have time to work on the gig itself. Hopefully you've put in enough practice time to keep the gig :)

TBC: What does 2013 have in store for Jayme Lewis?

JL: I'll be playing out more with the Jayme Lewis Band, as well as another summer tour with the Ben Kolarcik Band. LA Bass Lix is exploding right now so I'll be continuing to update it each week with a new lesson. I'm also getting ready to launch a YouTube show that will feature live concerts from my studio with various artists, and I'm really excited to get that lifted! We're still in the editing stages right now though.

TBC: Any parting words for The Bass Café readers?

JL: The most important thing that you can do as a musician is to listen. You'll never know how you're supposed to fit in the ensemble if you can't hear what's missing. When you know what everyone else in the band is doing, then and only then will you know for sure what you're supposed to be doing.

Jayme Lewis is a Los Angeles bass player, producer, author, and educator. Inspired at age seven to play bass when his father introduced him to Stanley Clarke's 'School Days' Jayme went on to earn his Bachelor's Degree in Music from California State University at Northridge. Jayme began his career as a sideman in LA, recording with artist from around the country and cutting his teeth in the studio tracking cues for Nickelodeon and Disney.

Jayme teaches at the [Lewis Music Academy](#) and on-line through [LA Bass Lix](#). Jayme started [Ignite Musical Training](#) to assist players with aural ear-training courses and in 2011 released the book [Advice for the Modern Worship Musician](#).

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