



Enjoy this e-Interview with Charity of *Charity and the JAMband*, a tribe of musicians creating original, rockin' and soulful music-and-dance experiences for families.

jamjamjam.com

Tell us about yourself and the JAMband.

I am a single mother of two sons (Silas, 7.5, and Jasper, 10.5) living in the Outer Sunset district (near Ocean Beach) in San Francisco. I write and record music for families, perform family concerts both solo and with my JAMband, and run a studio that offers music and dance classes based on the music. I find that juggling single motherhood with being an artist/entrepreneur is probably the hardest thing I've ever done, but the music and my kids' shining eyes and hearts keep me going.

The JAMband is a group of awesome musicians I've compiled over the years to help me turn the songs I channel into recorded and live music. We are an eclectic group, consisting of me (bandleader, songwriter, lead singer), my guitar player Daryn Roven (also engineer/producer on the last four JAMband CDs, father of two kids aged 4 and 7, and also my boyfriend/partner/whatever-we-40-somethings call that relationship!), my good friend and dance buddy Laurie Pomeranz (backing vocals, and mother of a 7-year-old), my fabulous twenty-something drummer Jake Wood (of Super Adventure Club and other musical escapades), my bass player Paul Lamb (contributor to many other musical projects, and also live and studio recording engineer and father of a teenager), and percussionist Danny Zingarelli (father of two kids aged 5 and 9).

What is your favorite song to jam with kids?

That's a hard one, but I would probably have to say *Amazing Rocket Ship* (off the new album *Party Like a Twinkle Star* - Disc 1 PARTY), because the kids are riveted to the story aspect of it, and the dance moves for climbing into the rocket ship, taking off! and saving the day are just so darn fun. (The world must like the song, too -- it was number one on Sirius/XM's Kids' Place Live music chart last week!)

A close second on that album is *Pancakes* -- the dance moves are hilarious (we become chickens, milk a cow, churn butter, and do a serious patty-cake thing in the chorus), and the kids LOVE the "flip it over now!" jump they/we do in the chorus. I also love love *Happy Fluffy* (off *Rock Your Sock Off* -2006), because we get to jump, shake and gyrate (their favorite things to do), and also fall down on the ground and dance on the floor (this always breaks down barriers and relaxes everyone, even the grown-ups, into a really silly kid place and everyone can't help but have fun!) Finally, *Peanut Butter and JAM* (off of *Peanut Butter and JAM* -2004) is still a hit -- SO fun to play, and the dance is really crazy, too. And then of course there's the really funky stuff, like *Happy Birthday Baby* (off of *Rock Your Socks Off*), *We Like Funky* (off *PB&JAM*) and *Rockstar* (off *Party Like a Twinkle Star*), all of which have really great dances the kids love, and the band gets to seriously rock/funk out, which is always a treat.

Are your own children an inspiration to your music?

Absolutely. Not only when it comes to topic matter and lyrics and stories from our life that turn into songs, but also just that I learned everything I know about singing to, dancing with and being present for children from my own amazing kids. They are my greatest teachers, hands down. Honestly, I would not even be doing music if it weren't for them. I went into the studio to record an album of adult music when I was pregnant with my oldest because I thought it would be the last music I ever made (didn't see how I could be a mom and an artist at the same time). Now look at what's happened 10 years and 5 CDs later! I have them to thank for all of it. My kids are also my inspiration to follow my heart, stay grounded, stay balanced, and take care of myself so I can stay grounded and present for them. Without music in my life, I am none of those things, and they showed me the way!

On a more specific note, while much of my music is upbeat and danceable (obviously inspired by my active and more crazy energetic mom/kid experiences as a mother of two active, creative boys), the entire TWINKLE CD (disc 2 of *Party Like a Twinkle Star*) is comprised of quieter more contemplative and introspective love songs for my children, and for myself as a mother (my inner child, as it were), composed as I parented them (and myself) through the separation of our family. That music was deeply affected and created by my mothering experience, and I think any parent listening to it will find resonance in the parenting challenges that necessarily surround the most magical and difficult of all jobs -- raising a child.

What is your kids' favorite song?

Favorite JAMband song: *Get Your Booty Out of Bed* / Favorite song: *Lemonade* by Protein

Why should we JAM with our kids?

Anything that gets us sharing molecules with our kids, anything that gets us up and moving, using our voices, using our bodies, sharing time, sharing space, sharing laughs is good for the family. JAMming -- singing and dancing -- with our kids is truly a panacea, because it touches on all these necessities. It's also great for language development, sensory motor integration, brain development, physical health, and infusing positive messages around the topics of self-esteem, kindness, gratitude, playfulness, feelings, magic, and the light within.

How can we get started moving?

Get yourself a copy of *Party Like a Twinkle Star* (or any JAMband CD for that matter), push the furniture to the walls, and have a dance party in the living room! It's that easy. Of course you can do this with any music, but I do believe the music we create is particularly well-suited for dance parties and family bonding -- the grooves are impeccable, the harmonies fun to sing along with, the stories fun to act out, the love totally present, etc.



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