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Magazine



*Meet
Jamie Grace!*

(You're probably already humming
her "Hold Me" hit song.)

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A Girl, Her Guitar and GREAT BIG DREAMS

Jamie Grace is someone you
really want to get to know.

by Susie Shellenbeger



It was only a \$70 hot-pink camera from Target*.

But Jamie Grace had a message to share.

So she set up the camera and began performing—monologues, singing and playing the guitar. The message? God's love and her personal relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. The recipient? Anyone who would watch her on YouTube.

"I talked and sang to that camera as if I were addressing the whole world," she says. "I knew God had given me gifts to share, and I was determined to obey."

Fast-forward to signing with TobyMac's Gotee* record label and performing at REVOLVE conferences around the nation. Let's get inside this whirlwind and discover the details.

Inside a Coffee Shop

Jamie jokingly says she was raised on Veggie Tales* and dcTalk. "I loved TobyMac's stuff, and I created a medley with nine of his songs that lasted for three and a half minutes," she says. "It was really fun, and I posted it on YouTube."

A few weeks later, TobyMac sent her a message on Twitter saying he'd love to talk with her about music. "I thought it was a joke, but his record company eventually found our number and called my mom saying, 'We're serious.'"

That's when the whirlwind began.

Jamie and her mom flew from Georgia to meet Toby at a coffee shop in Nashville. "He was so cool and so down to earth," she says. "I felt it was definitely a God-thing. So we started to work on some songs."

A few weeks later, Toby had a show in Atlanta and met Jamie's family. "We started writing, recording and working on the four songs for the EP that's called *Hold Me*."

"Hold Me" Almost Wasn't Held

Jamie's hit duet with Toby "Hold Me" was a big surprise to her. "I'd written the song in early 2010," she says, "and I loved it, but I didn't feel as though it was good enough to be recorded. I thought I might toss it inside my lineup at a couple of shows, but that's it."

Jamie's mom loved the song, and so did Jamie's sister and brother-in-law. When Jamie met with Toby and the producers, the thought never occurred to her to play it for them. "My mom literally made me play them the song, and Toby was like, 'Yeah, we're recording that. No doubt about it!'"

"Later—when we were in the studio recording—it was pretty much done and Toby jokingly threw out an idea that I loved," she says.

Toby said, "Hey, wouldn't it be funny if I said, 'I love, I love, I love, I love?' " Jamie thought it would be fun and encouraged him to add that to the song.

"We did it to be funny," she says, "but before we knew it, that phrase became one of the biggest parts of the song and people remembered it by that. In the grand scheme of things, we were hoping it would work, but we were really chill about it. But God stepped in and said, 'Let's go!'"

Jamie's Sound

Mix a tablespoon of reggae + a teaspoon of folk/alternative country. Blend well and add a sprinkle of hip-hop. Heat at full blast on your iPod, and you have the recipe for Jamie's sound.

"I'm blessed to be working with a team of people who have great ideas for me. They're helping me make songs around who I am and who I'm becoming," she says. "They're also saying, 'You're 19, try this style.' Or 'You want to try this instrument? Go for it.' There's a fun balance of them encouraging me and helping me with songs and a variety of sounds. Should we go with a banjo or a trumpet? They want me to discover who I am as an artist."

When Jamie's home, she tries to play guitar at least one or two hours a day, but sometimes it's tough with school and travel. "I play six different instruments," she says. "Drums, guitar, bass guitar, piano, ukulele and banjo. I try to learn a new instrument every year. During 2012, I hope to learn either mandolin or violin."

Jamie is God's Girl

She's not dating anyone right now, but Jamie is praying that in the next 10 years God will send just the right man into her life. "I jokingly tell people I've been single since I was born," she says. "I'm definitely an old-fashioned girl. I want the door opened for me, and I believe in being pursued. In my song 'God's Girl,' I sing about everything happening in His timing. When He's ready for me to take the step to begin dating, I'll take it. Meanwhile, I'm going to concentrate on loving Jesus and sharing Him through music." Jamie is all about purity and is determined to keep her mind in the right place. "If I like a guy I'm not one who is going to reach for his hand or give him a long hug. I've set boundaries and believe these are things that should be shared with someone I would be very serious with—not a casual dating relationship."

"I don't know if the first guy I date will end up being my husband, but I do know I'm not going to date anyone who isn't husband material. If a guy isn't working with me spiritually, doesn't respect my parents and doesn't respect his parents, then he's not dating material because he's not husband material."

Not Easy

Though Jamie is living her dream, she's experienced some really tough times. At age 11, Jamie was diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome—a condition in the brain that causes uncontrollable movements and sounds called tics.

"After I was diagnosed with TS, my world turned upside down," she says. "I was really frustrated and angry, confused and scared, hurt and insecure." After a couple of years of not liking who she was and feeling unsure about who she was going to become, Jamie heard Psalm 30:5 read in church one Sunday. "... Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning" (New Living Translation).

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"It completely changed my life!" she says. "I knew then that I was going to have frustrating times, I was going to cry—weep even—and there were going to be things I couldn't control, but joy would come in the morning, and it would be God's joy!"

Jamie then became passionate about her faith and helping others. "I started playing drums and guitar at church. I wanted to be a motivational speaker and encourage other kids, and I started writing songs. From that moment on, I wanted everyone in the world to know about God's joy."

Jamie didn't know then if God was going to use her through music, speaking, acting or making films, but she wanted to do all she could to tell the world about the joy of the Lord that she was rediscovering. "It wasn't long after that," she says, "I discovered I could post videos on YouTube." So she reached for her little hot-pink camera from Target ...

Susie Shellenberger is the founding editor of SUSIE Magazine, has written 51 books and is a full-time speaker.

Go to our website to find out more about Jamie—what she's studying in college, her goals and the inspiration behind the songs on her new CD, *One Song at a Time*. You can contact her at www.jamiegrace.com.

We're giving away 10 copies of her CD! To enter, send an email to info@susiemag.com and label it I WANT JAMIE! Be sure to include your first and last name and complete snail mail address. Winners will be selected at random and announced in March.

NODDING AWAY

Jamie sat in class furiously taking notes while the professor lectured on. She was only 16 but already enrolled in a college course. No one disagreed with what the professor was saying, but he noticed a girl shaking her head back and forth. It was Jamie. He asked if she disagreed with what he was teaching. She didn't. She also didn't even realize her head was moving.

That's because Jamie Grace has TS (Tourette's syndrome) and sometimes twitches involuntarily. She was only 9 when the twitches—or tics as they're commonly known—began. She'd squeeze her eyes shut for about four seconds, or bend her arms and legs rapidly, or squeeze her fingers and toes. When she was 11, she was diagnosed with Tourette's.

"I spent hours standing in front of the mirror learning how to disguise each of my tics," she says. "I'm currently taking Calm-U-Nat™. It's a vitamin that has no side effects. And while I still tic, it helps me with anxiety, which diminishes my tics. I love that."

Jamie founded Teens with TS when she was 15 so she could encourage others her age with Tourette's and also raise awareness about it.



Purchase Jamie Grace's CD at a great price through the "Shop" tab on www.SUSIEMag.com.