

YOUTH IN THE BLUES

DANNY GARWOOD

STORY BY DANNY GARWOOD & MARY CERTAIN

They say everything happens for a reason. In fact, I learned this at a really young age. Unfortunately, my biological father has a severe addiction to both drugs and alcohol. I was two with a newborn baby brother, when mom made the tough decision to leave and started raising us on her own as a single mother. He would be in and out, where we would see him sometimes, and then not at



all for a lot of years. When I was seven my mom met Mike Garwood, our now adoptive dad. In fact, he is a real dad in everything he does, even being super hard on us. When he stepped into our lives, he gave it a whole new meaning and made us an even better family. He's the reason I love the blues so much and if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be playing guitar. He introduced me to a lot of artists which led to my influences: Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Stevie Ray Vaughan, BB King, John Lee Hooker, and many more.

In December of 2019 I had the best day of my whole life. I was adopted by Mike



and I will forever remember that moment. I can connect with the blues because of my life before and after Mike stepped in, because no matter what emotion I feel, I can take it all out on my guitar, and that's why I find the blues to be so great.

The blues is like a best friend to me. And when I feel lonely, stressed, happy, angry, no matter what I'm feeling, the blues has always gotten me through it. My first year of



middle school was a terrible experience. I was picked on, teased, and bullied; you name it. I wasn't known because I played music but because I was shorter than pretty much every kid at that school. I was known as the short kid, and had not a single friend. I later realized that I did have a friend, the blues. Every emotion, everything I felt at school I held in, and when I got home, I expressed all of those feelings on my guitar. I absolutely hate being shorter than everyone else. I look like a 10-year-old rather than a 13-year-old.



I realized it didn't matter how tall or short you are, or how much you weigh, no matter what, you can always connect with blues music. "Blues is easy to play but hard to feel."- Jimi Hendrix. I will forever remember and live that.

Being a kid with an old soul always made me feel left out at school. I didn't have any kids my age who had a passion for music like I did. I realized that I didn't need a kid who was very similar to me. I looked back and noticed my opportunities, the gift that God has given me to play the blues. When I play the guitar, I feel like I'm in the right place. My level of confidence is fully released. Music, guitar, and my emotions have allowed me to meet great people in the music industry.

When I knew I wanted to play guitar I was 8 years old and my Dad had shown me a couple of his six strings that he barely touched. At the moment I pressed my fingers against the frets of his Squier Stratocaster it sparked an interest. I started taking lessons and eventually spent some time at The School of Rock.

When I was 10 my parents were supportive enough to take me to my first ever open jam in Wisconsin. In fact, I had so much fun playing with the House band, that the



front man, Steve Godfriaux, "Mr. G" eventually became my Teacher/Mentor.

Mr. G. taught me a lot about etiquette, especially when playing with bands. He taught me the basics of what you need to know at an open jam: what certain signals meant, the Nashville number system, when necessary to bust out a guitar solo, and letting other musicians have their moments as well. It led me to a really good spot within my music journey and I wouldn't be where I'm at today without that man. We played a ton of gigs together and he is a huge part of my journey through the music.

In 2020 my family moved from Illinois to Tennessee. I was 11 years old at the time and that was when I met another great mentor,

Jake Taylor. To this very day, I have taken lessons with Jake and let me tell you, he is a very skilled guitar player! Jake has taught me things beyond my knowledge and things I wouldn't expect myself to learn. He has pushed me to challenge myself which makes me an even better musician. Without him, I have no clue where I would be. His advice, support, and lessons have pushed me, and they make me better every week.

Since I moved to Nashville, I've met a lot of great people and have improved so much because of it. For a while when I played at these jams around Nashville, I never felt the urge or had enough confidence to start singing. Although, I pushed myself to a point where I didn't care what people thought in the crowd. That stage, that microphone, and guitar all became my comfort zone. Singing definitely helped a lot and has opened more opportunities for me to play with some of the most talented musicians here in Nashville. Being invited to play with them and the mentorship and things they show me will be with me forever.

Between the ages of eight and nine, I had the honor to play with such artists as Joanna Connor and the son of blues legend Lonnie Brooks, Wayne Baker Brooks. I will forever remember those days and am still shocked I had the opportunity to play with these legends.

So thankful for all the amazing people that invite me to play: Chris Auston, Tommy Marsh, Donnie Miller, Jim Gustin, Ricky Godfrey, John Prestia, Bart Pike, along with Donnie Clark who has opened their jams and have given me tons of knowledge on pretty much a weekly basis. There are many more that I'm sure I'm forgetting to mention, but thank you to everyone that have supported

me from fellow musicians, fans, friends and of course.....family.

I'm looking forward to becoming a part of the Pinetop Perkins foundation and carrying on their tradition supporting the blues and young musicians.

I'm very excited for this upcoming summer. I'll be playing at the Crooked Eye Tommy Blues Fest in Nashville, Friday after 5 in Kentucky, I'll be at the IBC's taking different workshops, and at more clubs and jams around the Nashville area.

Another thing I'd like to mention is how appreciative I am of my parents' support. They're the ones finding the jams, finding places I can play, but in general, they are raising me so well. They've pushed me, challenged me, and are downright hard on me, but it's for a good purpose. They've both introduced me to all kinds of artists and given me the life that I would've never expected. Not to mention my brother Jack who has taken the time to come to almost every single one of my jams. I am truly blessed for his support. Although we do argue, fight, name call, you name it, he's still a great brother and I am beyond thankful for him.



I can't explain how grateful I am for where my passion has taken me and am super excited for my future. Music has been a big part of my life and I can't imagine where I'd be without it. Thank you to everyone that has helped along my journey.

My name is Danny Garwood and my purpose in life is to keep the blues alive. 🎸

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