

# jennifer martin



Biographies are both mysterious and a little dangerous to me. Having worked in publicity and marketing in the music industry for a few years, I understand the impact, both good and bad, of words, spin and image. I understand the desire to ask a portrait painter or a Photoshop expert to tweak this feature or that. But I also know that life, for all its wonder, is not picture perfect. There are hard days. Sometimes there are hard years. And goodness there are flaws—at least there are in me. So, how to portray the real picture without appearing glitzy or self-deprecating? How to give an honest snapshot of where I've been and where I hope to go? I really have no idea, but for starters...

I was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas where my musical tastes and experiences were as eclectic as the city I grew up in. Surrounded by musical theater, classical music, a rich folk music scene, and singing nuns, I was able to play the piano by ear and enjoyed mimicking every one of these diverse and beautiful sounds. My first audience was an auditorium full of fellow kindergarteners and nervous parents. Next it was a family of squirrels who would literally lounge on the windowsill outside my practice room as I played, listening to the music. Eventually, and I do mean eventually, I began to find my own voice, my own style, and to my surprise, my audiences graduated from relatives and squirrels, to wonderful people all over the world.

I've been blessed with some industry successes along the way. A few years ago I was a finalist at the Kerrville, Texas New Folk Contest. Performing Songwriter magazine chose "***By The Waves***" as one of its top 12 Indy albums of the year. I've been blessed with songwriting contracts with EMI-CMG and Word Music. I've sung at *World Youth Days* in Rome and in Toronto. I've teamed with some of the best session players in the world who have recorded my songs and given their nod of approval. I've opened for an eclectic roster of artists I admire including folk luminaries Tish Hinojosa, Sara Hickman and Cheryl Wheeler. For all this and more, I am grateful.

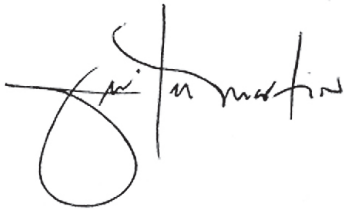
But for me, the most remarkable musical happenings in my life have been the ones behind the scenes. Things like working with Jillian, a beautiful auburn-haired special needs child, who helped me discover deep joy in the midst of very real suffering. Our trip to the L'Arche in Toronto in 2005 to perform and to teach friends new ways to make their wheelchairs dance is one I will never forget. Then there was the year

I spent developing a worship program at Calvary Chapel Bible College in Siegen, Germany. The students there of all ages and nationalities profoundly impacted my life and helped me identify new desires of my heart: teaching and pastoral care. While I have long-enjoyed worship leading and songwriting, I have known ever since my time in Germany that mentoring and encouraging other musicians is my greatest joy.

And I am leaving out other incredible stories that have shaped my life and art. Stories like Father Johannes and an electric blue guitar in Austria; singing with Dave Durham and friends at La Founderie in Paris; sharing the stage with Karen Lafferty in the Czech Republic; amazing outreaches and workshops throughout India and Romania. In all of these settings and more, I have often felt like Forrest Gump shaking hands with the most amazing people at the most amazing times and places, not for any credit of my own, but because God has such a sense of humor and such a special propensity to use the weak and the foolish.

My gratitude abounds for all the amazing friends, producers, writers, priests and pastors in my life who have encouraged me along the way, who have helped me tap into the voice I never knew I had and dared me to share it. By grace, and one song at a time, I am endeavoring to share the kindness you have shown me to others. And while I'm not sure what's next, if the past is any indicator, I need to have my passport ready.

Hope to see you there.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Martin". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J" and a vertical line through the middle of the name.