

An interview with Jeff Holbert- a mason of music

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Country-rock locals from Hendersoville, Born Broke, officially released their self-titled debut *Born Broke 2007* late last year and have since gone through many changes.

Around the time the album came out, their drummer Spencer Wynn, who was critical in the formative years of the group's current sound, left the band. Just several months prior to that, the group had added a second guitarist, but he soon departed the group not long after Wynn.

Born Broke is back as a trio now with the two primary members, bassist Adam Hamilton, and singer/guitarist Jeff Holbert, continuing down the self-made path they've always took. I sat down with Jeff Holbert and discussed the band and where they intend to take their music in the future.

Holbert is a sort of country-gentleman philosopher, and he addressed every question with a slow, calculated response. He approaches his music much like he approaches his day job as a brick mason: everything has its right place to be, and there is a method for getting it there.

When you first started playing out and playing gigs regularly, what were your goals as a band?

The goal was just to try to get better really, more than anything, to take the whole

creation to another level: playing, singing, being tight, teaching one another. The more we played out, the more reality settled in, and we realized that we needed to chill out and just do this as a fun thing, just play music, play we want to play, and have a good time with it.

Now that you've got this new album, and this lineup change, where do you see born broke going in the future?

I see us as being a decent local band. Local recognition is all I want, local radio, and just have a good show. Somebody that knows me can come and listen and say "that's Jeff".

If the chance ever came along to do a big tour would you take it?

I would totally be into it if the money was there. If I could make enough money to pay for my house, steady income you know, hell yeah I'd be down for it. I think I could turn out more material, original songs, if I had time to work on it that I spend at work now.

Out of all of the kind of gigs that you have played, what type of venue or atmosphere suits the band best?

Sometimes it's hard to tell because I get fooled. Sometimes it's more of the feel of the night than the place or the folks. I used to think that older folks liked us more, and sometimes I think it's hippy folks, kind of country folks that like us more. It's hard to say. You look at the crowd and think

they ought to be doing right, but they aren't, and sometimes everybody's having a good time, and there are nights when everybody is just watching.

Is there anything more you would like to say about what success means to you, or Born Broke's goals as a band?

Success would be progressing at a steady rate even if it isn't getting famous, if it was just getting to a point where I could make some money at doing it, more or less just getting better at it.

Do you guys work off of a set list, or do you just play?

Set list. Always. I can pretty much say I never do a show without one. There's two things I never do a show without, a set list, and a pack of strings (laughs). I've done shows and it seems like they stall out if I don't have something to look out. (Laughs) Sometimes things stall out now too, but it helps a little bit having something to go by. Sometimes I'll have the set list there, and I won't even go by it. I'll be about four songs into it, and then I just start jumping around.

Can you give a little bit of insight into what the recording process was like for *Born Broke 2007*?

Because the place was so small, we could only record the bass and the drums [live]. I had to re-do everything. I didn't like that, because I wanted to be set up where I was recording too, so if I was turning out some good stuff, [it] was getting kept. I was

told from the very start that everything I was doing was scratch, and I really didn't like that.

So whenever you guys were recording a song, Adam and Spencer would be done pretty quick and you had a lot more work to do?

We set up one Saturday, and nailed down the bass and the drums. I spent almost eight hours in there by myself doing the guitar. I felt rushed, and I had to play them over and over again. I didn't want any crap on it you know, missed notes; even if the timing wasn't exactly right, I didn't want a bunch of wrong notes in there. It was real tough for me.

Are there any tracks of the album that you are particularly proud of and why?

Even though we are trying to go for more mellow songs, all the rock songs are still close to my heart. I still like to rock it out you know. I would still like to write some more rock songs and play them, it's just I can't get it to fit with trying to play local and small.

Anything else you would like to say about playing with *Born Broke*?

I just hope it keeps rolling along. As long as me and Adam are hanging out and jamming, Born Broke will always be around. If we quit and I joined somebody else, or started something new with some other guys, I would start something totally different.