James King O’Connor

Bio

James King O’Connor entered the world in 1997 already jamming. He used to kick and jump around in his mom’s belly when she would listen to his dad’s rock band. To put him to sleep, his mom and dad would crank up the music and dance around with him. James comes by music honestly. His dad, an electrical engineer, played guitar in rock bands for many years and his mom was a tap and ballet dancer before becoming a teacher. He has always loved all types of music and felt that all basements were filled with musical equipment and recording gear.

James began playing the drums after receiving a set of electronic drums for Christmas when he was nine years old. He began taking lessons right away and has been taking them every week since from Tom Konopka. James and his talented friends started a rock band when they were ten years old and enjoyed great local success opening for the likes of Janis Joplin’s band Big Brother and the Holding Company, rockin out at the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame, playing at the Cleveland House of Blues, getting gigs at several festivals including setting an early attendance record at the Cuyahoga Falls Rockin-on-the-River.

After Retro disbanded in 2012, James began playing music with various local musicians. He wrote and recorded his first song, “Insanity”, at a professional studio when he was only thirteen years old. James honed his skills playing drums in his church worship and praise team since the age of 12. James also gained skills during his high school years, playing classic jazz in the Cuyahoga Falls jazz band The Gold Tones. For the school funk/jazz band, James played electric guitar. In the high school symphonic orchestra James played percussion with emphasis on timpani and even played some string bass. One of his great enjoyments in high school has been playing the quads where he served as squad leader. He received the honor of “Individual of the Year” for the jazz band as a junior and regularly receives the highest honors at every adjudicated event in which he participates. Most notably he was recently selected by the Ohio Music Education Association to be the 2016 drummer in the Ohio All State Jazz Band.

James is an avid listener of music and his musical pallet began to expand and he soon found himself learning many genres of music. Some of James’s current musical inspirations include Radiohead, Modest Mouse, John Coltrane, Neutral Milk Hotel, Big Thief, Swans, Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, Phil Elverum, Cap’n Jazz, The Velvet Underground, Miles Davis’s second great quintet, and many, many, many more. James grew up learning the drums listening to music like Rush, King Crimson, Yes, and other classic rock outfits he still has a soft spot for, or actively listens to today. As a drummer, he currently plays original and classic rock with Retro guitarist/singer pal Michael Weber in The Michael Weber Show. James also plays guitar and fronts his Indie Rock band, the Ballroom Charades, for which he writes all of the band’s original music. When James isn’t songwriting for the Charades, he writes and performs often with his other group, Yearwalk, a collaboration between a few of his close friends. While James dabbles in guitar, piano, bass, and vocals, his primary instrument and first love has always been drum kit and percussion.

James currently attends The Ohio State University in Columbus where he is studying Music Education with an emphasis in Jazz Drums. While James has a very high GPA and is strong in math and science, he especially enjoys music theory and writing. He can often be found in the family basement studio writing melodies on guitar or keyboard to support the lyrics to his newest song creation.

He cherishes his loving family including his older sister, a doctor, and younger sister a singer/dancer in a local competition choir team, ETC. James’s mother teaches mathematics and his father is a utility engineer.

James is determined to grow his musical talents and make a living performing, writing, recording and teaching music. He could have done anything but he followed his passion and is looking forward to the next chapter in his lifetime musical dream as a full time college student.