



BillyJonas.com photo Ashley Farmer, along with the rest of The Billy Jonas Band, perform at The White Horse in Black Mountain in December 2016

Ashley Farmer celebrates her community, craft and the Billy Jonas Band



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A great honor



[http://www.salisburypost.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/0530-Farmer-and-M.Obama .jpg](http://www.salisburypost.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/0530-Farmer-and-M.Obama.jpg)

Submitted photo Ashley Farmer with former First Lady Michelle Obama in 2011, when the Billy Jonas Band performed at the White House Easter Egg Roll.

By Laurie Lyda

Rowan Public Library

SALISBURY – On Saturday, Salisbury resident Ashley Farmer will get a rare opportunity to share her talents with her hometown.

“I don’t get to perform (in Salisbury) very often,” the singer says. “Folks here constantly hear me talk about what I do for a living, but they never actually get to see it in person.”

Farmer will perform with the Billy Jonas Band at 1:30 p.m. Saturday in the Stanback Outdoor Theatre at Dan Nicholas Park. The free concert is part of Rowan Public Library’s Summer Reading Kickoff celebration.

Farmer has been a performer since childhood. Since 2005, she’s performed with Billy Jonas, a folk artist and industrial re-percussionist, and his self-titled band. It was with the Billy Jonas Band that Farmer enjoyed what she terms “the most amazing performance experience I’ve ever had” when the band was invited to play at the 2010 White House Easter Egg Roll.

“We performed for thousands of people that day, including the president and the rest of the first family,” she recalls. “I’ve never felt more pride in our music than I did that day, knowing that we were actively playing a part in our nation’s history. I was honored to meet and speak with our first lady, and the photo captured of the two of us from that day will forever hang in a frame on my wall.”

The experience was humbling for Farmer. “It made me very aware of how critical it was to choose wisely the lyrics that we sing and to honor and respect the meanings behind those lyrics.”

Farmer’s respect for both her audience and her craft shines through her work.

“Ashley’s enthusiasm for her community as a whole, and its art, music and culture specifically, is refreshing to say the least,” says Emma Rose, the library’s East Branch supervisor and a fan of Farmer and the Billy Jonas Band. “Not

only is she quite creative, but she also celebrates and supports the creativity and initiative of others.”

The creative process can be challenging, though.

“Making a living out of being creative is like trying to have a tea party on a roller coaster,” Farmer says. “When you’re on the way up, it’s a fairly smooth ride; you tend to not spill any tea. When you’re headed downward, you might as well kiss that tea goodbye.”

Luckily for Farmer, she finds inspiration and encouragement in myriad places.

“When I’m having a low moment or feeling uninspired, I tend to gravitate toward the people in my life that are actively creating pieces of art. I have several professional artists and musicians who are good friends, and I love sitting and watching them while they work on their craft. It always lights a fire inside me. And on the flip side, when I’m on a high moment, I’d like to think that what I’m doing is serving as an inspiration for other people,” she says.

“Most of my inspiration comes from the people that are around me. I love bearing witness to people living, loving and working hard for what they want to see in the world – especially if it benefits our community. I’m driven by compassion, and there’s no shortage of that in this town,” she says. “We live in a very loving, caring community.”

She notes that Salisbury’s growth is in itself motivation. “We’ve got creative art spaces, fantastic venues for music, fun and eclectic shops, and countless community events to be involved in. You don’t have to go far to find inspiration.”

Farmer enjoys celebrating the “life and character” of Salisbury. “There are so many great people who live in this community, and it’s the people that make it such a great place to live. I think it’s very important to show support for the community you live in and for the people and businesses that make it thrive.”

Farmer is a strong supporter of local institutions such as the library.

“I can’t stress enough ... how important it is for us as a community to encourage and inspire readers. RPL’s summer reading program is just one of many ways that we can promote a love for higher learning and open-mindedness in our children.”

Farmer values the power of reading. “It’s a window of opportunity for learning and can provide therapy and guidance in our daily lives.”

“The musical work I do (with the band) is nothing short of magical,” she says. “The songs appeal to people of all ages, both the young and the young at heart, with witty lyrics and relatable stories. Instrumentally speaking, what sets us apart the most from other bands is that we use ‘found objects’ along with standard musical instruments. We have drums that are made from buckets and barrels; we have a marimba made from PVC pipe, chimes made from door keys, clickers and clackers, and all sorts of fun instruments that can easily be made with things that you find in your home.”

Farmer and members of the Billy Jonas Band have a primary purpose every time they’re on stage: to give joy to their audience. “We want every single person that attends our concerts, no matter how old or young they are, to walk away saying that they enjoyed themselves.”

Rowan Public Library’s Summer Reading Kickoff is a free concert open to all ages. The kickoff also will include a crafts and activities festival from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the sports field. For more information, call 704-216-8234 or visit www.rowanpubliclibrary.org (<http://www.rowanpubliclibrary.org>).

For more about Farmer and the Billy Jonas Band, visit www.ashleyjofarmer.com (<http://www.ashleyjofarmer.com>) or www.billyjonas.com (<http://www.billyjonas.com>).

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Ashley Jo Farmer

Thank you so much for this great article! I can't tell you how excited we are for the concert on Saturday! It's an honor and a privilege to have been asked to perform for such a worthy cause!

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MoniKa Borrás Bigsby · Legal Administrative Assistant at B. Ashley Andrews Attorney At Law, PLLC

OMGOSH! EVERYONE needs to come hear this super lady and her friends. You will NOT be disappointed!

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