Enclosed are questions and answers for 1) General Questions, 2) “Mine” Single Release, and 3) “Come Home” Single Release. All copy is available for non-exclusive use in any blog, magazine, etc. benefitting publicity of Megan Stoneson.

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**General Questions**

**Q: When you song write, do you sit down in a single session and a song comes from there, or is it more of a journey?**

A: I have a pretty diverse way of writing songs, which I’m sure is true of many artists! With one of my most recent songs, “Mine,” I wrote it during a time that I was trying to write songs almost every day for a few weeks. One night, I sat down with my wife’s acoustic guitar, and just had this simple melody in my head. Simple chords, and honest words. 15 minutes later, I had a whole song with lyrics and everything. With “Come Home,” another one of my recent songs, I was missing my wife. She started a new shift at work, and I had evenings alone. I started singing the first words of the now-chorus of that song, and I recorded it in my phone. I have hundreds of song ideas in my phone recordings. After that, I revisited that chorus and wrote the whole song based on my feelings. In the past though, It’s taken me months to piece together a song. Overall, I try to record or write down every idea, melody, and rhythm that comes to my mind. After that comes the magic of production.

**Q: When did you start writing music?**

A: I started writing music from a very young age, even though I didn’t know it at the time. I remember writing lyrics on a little yellow notebook I had on the bookshelf as a kid. I wrote poems in high school. I harmonized with friends while singing to the radio in middle school. After a while, when I was 18, I officially wrote my first song. It was a Christmas song, to put on a CD for my mom. After that, I wrote a jazzy love song my senior year in high school. After that, I just haven’t stopped.

**Q: Who produces your music or do you do it all yourself?**

A: I’ve worked with many musicians that have stepped into my ‘studio’ to play on my songs (aka my house next to my computer), and I love every one of them. But as far as songwriting and producing goes, it’s been mostly me. My mixing and mastering genius, John McLucas, is the only person besides myself that really touches my songs. That might change in the future, but for now, I have a passion for sitting down and producing my songs all on my own. Drum beats, chords, arrangement, vocal tracks. I love going into my own creative world, and it takes very special people to enter into that space – I just have to find my people.

**Q: You’re such a great performer but you’re also such an incredible recording artist. What comes more naturally to you and what’s the most fun—the studio or the stage?**

A: I’ll be honest – neither. Performing didn’t come naturally, and neither did recording my songs. I think it takes years to make those things feel natural. To feel comfortable, and vulnerable. After more than 6 years of practicing recording and performing, both of them feel more at home than ever. I can sit down at my computer and produce any day, and I can perform at a spontaneous open mic. I love both equally – one is private and quiet, one is public and exciting. It’s taken me a long time to learn how to perform my songs in an honest and engaging way. It’s taken me forever to learn how to produce my own songs, with just me, my computer, and my microphone. I’m lucky to have had the resources, and community to have learned both.

**Q: Did you have any formal musical training, or was it something you just taught yourself?**

A: A bit of both actually. My parents put me in classical piano lessons from age 7 through the end of high school. I’m so thankful for that, piano will have a special place in my heart. As for guitar, I learned to play it by searching Google and listening to what sounded right. With singing, I loved signing my whole life. Only when I was 18 did I have the courage to sing in front of other people. I used to be so shy! But over time, I taught myself to sing the way I do now.

**Q: You record in your living room, and your songs are powerful, catchy, and beautiful. What would you tell someone just starting out who thinks they can’t get anywhere with their home studio?**

A: For me, everything with music started small. First, I recorded at home with Garageband and a snowball microphone my dad got me. Then, I went to Guitar Center with my savings and asked for help getting equipment to record more professionally. Friends, family, and mentors helped me along the way. Later on, I took a couple courses in college about recording, and learned even more. At the heart of all of it all was my passion, and the encouragements from others, that kept me going. I knew nothing at first, and I still have room to grow today. What I would tell others is that it doesn’t happen all at once. One day you’re learning something hard, and the next day you’re a little better at that hard thing. You just keep taking it one small step at a time, and it helps to have friends that push you. Mainly, if you have a passion for this, you’ll do it. You can do it. It might take some time, but you have that.

**Q: For you, what’s the most important thing when you’re building a backing band or collaborating with another artist?**

A: I think most of the time, I follow my heart and my gut. Sometimes when I hear another artist or musician, I’m in awe of their talent and heart. If I can, there are some amazing artists I’d be so honored to collaborate with, that have the same passion that I do, and their own incredible sound. Human kindness matters too – it goes a long way when someone is kind to me, and visa versa. In terms of getting together with a backing band, honestly I just love to work with my friends. I love to work with people that are supportive and excited about my music, and also it’s important to me that my band has fun playing with me, and feels respected.

**Q: Who inspires your sound?**

A: Growing up, my dad would put on some Norah Jones music, and my mom would put on old jazz classics. I’ve always loved jazz, R&B, and soul music because of what my parents put on in the house. When I grew older, I started listening to and loving singers like Ariana Grande, Kehlani, Lianne La Havas, Corinne Bailey Rae, and more. I feel like those women taught me to sing, on every car ride I had alone. I can hear their influences in every part of my singing, and I’m thankful for how they’ve inspired me.

**Q: Practice makes perfect. As you look back how have you practiced for live performance? Was there an experience that you had growing up that made you comfortable on stage in front of people?**

A: One of the first times I performed, it was at a band camp talent show in high school. My sister is a singer too, and so we learned a duet together – “I’ve Got This Friend” by the Civil Wars. I had tried so so hard to learn the guitar chords. I played them, and they weren’t perfect – but I was surrounded by my sister, and all of my closest friends. They cheered so loud for me, and I felt so loved. From then on, I grew more confident with every open mic, every show, when I had friends by my side. Now I can go on my own, or with my friends and my wife, and be confident in what I have to show the world.

I also took classical piano lessons growing up, and learning how to play such a difficult and beautiful instrument in front of people was scary. But it taught me that practice is also such an important element to performing. There’s magic on the stage in the moment, but the foundation of that magic is what happens when you’re alone at home preparing for that special day.

**Q: Where are you playing and where can we find your music?**

A: Right now, I’m playing around my current home, the central coast. It’s so beautiful here and I love getting to play at some of the most well-known wineries and venues in California. If something’s coming up, I’ll be posting it on my website and social media @meganstoneson, and [www.meganstoneson.com](http://www.meganstoneson.com). As for my music, my new music is on all platforms under Megan Stoneson. All the love to my listeners.

**Q: What’s it like being married to a musician as well?**

A: My wife, Sherell Jane, is such an incredible singer and songwriter. When we met, it was at a songwriter showcase in Arroyo Grande, CA. I was playing one of my songs, and then later she played one of hers. My style was different than hers, and she was playing an acoustic rock style. I lingered to meet her, for no reason that I knew of. We became fast friends, best friends, and partners in life. I love being married to a musician, because she gets me. She gets the late nights of playing shows, planning song releases, and the highs and lows that come with a passion like this. She gets wanting to do music so bad, and she gets how tiring it can be. But most of all, we support each other to no end. I love her and her music so much, and she loves me and mine. It’s the biggest gift I’ve ever been given – a best friend that I love, and a partner in my dreams too.

**Q: Is your family also musically inclined?**

A: Yes, and I probably get my love for music from my parents! I fell asleep as a kid, listening to my dad play classical guitar. My mom plays a giant, beautiful harp. My brother plays trombone, and I’ve had fun with him in marching band. My sister is an opera singer, she has the strongest lungs and most powerful sound I’ve ever heard. Absolutely beautiful. My sister and I would sing together growing up. My mom, sister, and I used to sing trios together for my grandma. All in all, I love my family, and I’m thankful that they nurtured the music inside me for all these years.

**Q: What was your first show like? I know everyone’s got a story of when a show did not go well. Tell us about yours.**

A: My first shows started as a progression. I did a couple songs at open mics, then I did 20 minute sets at showcases, then I did 1 hour, then 2 and 3. It’s a bit of a blur what my first show was, but I can tell you about one of my most awful shows. It was a few years ago, I got a gig at a very fancy winery. My PA speaker was smaller than the venue, and it was a super hot day. My guitar string broke on my electric guitar, so I got my backup acoustic. But, the pickup on that guitar wasn’t working either. So I went back, got my electric, and played a whole 2 hours with a broken string guitar, since I didn’t have extra strings with me. Needless to say, I learned a LOT from that performance. I learned to show up overprepared, to practice more, and to make sure I’m confident and comfortable with the gig I’m doing. Now, I can’t remember a recent show where I’ve had a problem. I know how to take care of my instruments and myself, and how to be confident in the show I’m doing. Like any other musician, we learn from the bad, and keep going with what’s good for us.

**Q: What’s the most important thing to remember or focus on when gigging professionally?**

A: For me, I think realistically, the most important thing is double checking you have all the right gear. But emotionally, it’s so important to show up with a great attitude. If I have a bad day, or I’m burned out – the most important thing is to re-center myself, and get excited about making music in front of people. There’s something so special about being able to share my music with the world, so for me it’s important to show up to any performance positive, confident, and excited. You never know what good thing might happen at a gig.

**Q: What’s next for you?**

A: What’s next is just enjoying my new releases, “Mine” and “Come Home.” They are my favorite songs so far, and I’m so proud of them. I also am going to be performing more, as always, so I’ll keep everyone in the loop about that.

**“Mine” Single Release (Release date 2/11/22)**

**Q: This song is so good and so vulnerable. Is it about your real life relationship?**

A: Yes, it’s about my wife Sherell ☺ Over the years, the hardest thing for me in songwriting has been vulnerability. I sang about crushes, feelings, and stories. But I also felt like I wasn’t sure what I wanted to say in music. I wasn’t sure who I was, what my soul needed to tell the world. Now, I’m on a journey to being my most vulnerable ever. “Mine” is about when I told my parents I’d fallen in love with a woman. They didn’t expect that of me, I didn’t either, and to be honest they had a hard time with it at first. Growing up Christian, I had an identity shift too when I fell in love with Sherell. But there’s one thing I knew for sure – that I was in love with this woman, and that it was holy. This song is about the freedom I’ve always wanted with my beliefs, the freedom I have now, and the love I get to have for the rest of my life.

**Q: How is writing about something you’re really experiencing now different than some of your earlier work?**

A: My earlier work, which was released under my maiden name “Megan Steinke,” is always going to be special to me. My music used to be artistic, jazzy, and introspective. But I also wrote all that music still figuring out who I was, what I believed in, what I had to say in my music. I’ve grown a lot over the years, and at age 24 (almost 25), I feel like I have the courage and experience to write honestly. I can write about my relationship with my wife, I can write about lonely times, good times, joy, pain, and everything else I want to be honest about. I feel more open than ever, and also more solid in myself than ever. Musically, my new music is more mainstream, and honestly I love it more. I connect with my new music even more than I have with music in the past.

**Q: How involved were you in the process of creating these percussion driven rhythms? Did marching band or ensemble help give you an edge?**

A: I like to produce sounds and beats, so most of the time I make the rhythm to my own songs. Normally for a song, I have an idea in my head of what it should sound like with a whole band. And yes, I was in marching band in middle, high school, and college – it was so much fun. I played snare drum, cymbals, and all sorts of percussion. Having that experience was amazing, and gave me a chance to grow my skills in rhythm.

**Q: Is this song about your wife? How does she like your new music?**

A: Yes it is! My wife is the most encouraging human, and I love her so much. She’s told me this new song is her favorite of mine so far, and that makes me so happy. Sherell is supportive of all of my music, and has loved every one of my songs. She’s supported me be my truest self in my music, and I’m thankful for that. I’m also very lucky to have her help with creativity too, because she took the photo of me for the single artwork. She’s my best friend, and my best supporter.

**Q: Any advice for someone telling their parents about their new special someone?**

A: It’s different for everyone, you know. For me, telling my parents about my girlfriend was incredibly hard. I hid it from them for 6 months, because me being in love with a woman was against beliefs I grew up with. Essentially, telling my parents who I was dating was ‘coming out’ to them too, as bisexual. There are so many reasons someone might be nervous to tell their parents about a new relationship. Difference in religion, culture, life experience, beliefs – so many things might create tension in a family. That’s why love is so powerful. It bridges the gap between all of it, and all we can do is hope our families accept our truth, and our love. Either way, we have the most powerful thing in the world – bravery, and love.

**“Come Home” Single Release (Release date 2/25/22)**

**Q: The lyrics of this song make me think you’re kind of an introvert.  It’s clear you’re also a highly productive artist. Is it difficult for you to balance your nature of being a productive artist with also intentional acts of self-care?**

A: Yes, I’m a bit of an introvert sometimes. I love being around people, and sometimes I love being alone. When I wrote “Come Home,” I was alone at home, missing my wife. She just started a new shift at work, so I had evenings alone. During that time though, I had a lot of time to write songs and go into my own space. It’s definitely hard to balance being productive and caring for myself. Honestly I don’t do ‘self-care’ enough. Lately I’ve had a hard time relaxing, having fun, spend time with friends. That will be a big area of growth for me!

**Q: How long does it typically take for you to write a song to completion?**

A: It definitely varies. My single “Mine” took me less than an hour to write the lyrics to – I just sat down with my wife’s acoustic guitar, and sang my heart out. Some songs I write, piece by piece, over months. Writing chords and lyrics, whether all at once or part of a long process, comes so naturally when I have something to say. When I’m feeling a certain way or going through something, the songs just come to help me express that.

**Q: This song has a lot of interesting harmonies and ethereal effects. As you built it, did the lyrics inspire the production, or visa versa?**

A: Honestly, I don’t remember! The first thing I created for this song was the chorus. I was feeling lonely and missing my wife, and the lyrics for the chorus just came out of me. I recorded it on my phone, and later revisited it to create the rest of the song. After I laid down some piano and vocals, I just kept adding sounds and drums and everything else! It was like making a layered cake from the bottom up, adding whatever layers felt right.

**Q: Each of your projects have a different sound from each other. Is this because you find yourself developing your sound and coming into your own as an artist the more you create, or is it more because you have a specific vision and vibe in mind for each project?**

A: Right now, I’m the most sure of myself as I’ve ever been. I’m still figuring out myself too, but I feel so confident with my beliefs, and my heart. I feel so free in my music, and my music now has helped me be more vulnerable than ever. Because of that, I’m becoming more of the artist that I want to be every day. My songs are always evolving to fit who I am at the time. My previous music, released under my maiden name “Megan Steinke,” was reflective of myself at the time I wrote those songs. Sometimes for my previous songs, I had a vision for a project. Sometimes I just wrote my feelings into a song, with no agenda. And right now, I have no project in mind except more music!

**Q: What did “home” look like for you growing up? What does it look like nowadays?**

A: Growing up, home looked like my parents’ house. I had a pretty stable environment, with food, shelter, music, family, church, fun. That was home to me, and I’m so grateful for it. Now, home is my wife. Home is our two pups, Australian shepherds. Home is walking on the beach with a friend, calling my sister on the phone, sitting and watching live music. Home is sitting at a piano, when I can find one, and playing songs I used to know. And home is still at my parents’ house, visiting along with my siblings and my new little family unit.