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ARTIST BIO (revised July 2010): **Janis Ian**

"Before Ellen came out and anyone who wasn't a Bible scholar knew who Lilith was.. before Jewel even.. there was Janis Ian." Rolling Stone, October 1997

Her grandparents were immigrants, and she was raised to believe in the American Dream. Her parents taught her that even though America was not perfect, it was the best country on earth because it allowed you to help change the bad things. That's why they attended rallies for civil rights, and embraced socialist ideas that were not the norm in that era. When her father, a New Jersey chicken farmer, went to a meeting about the price of eggs, the F.B.I. picked him up on his way home. A year later, Janis was born into a world of surveillance, interviews with neighbors and landlords, moving often because her father would be denied tenure, being observed through binoculars at her summer camp as a six year old.

As a musician, Janis was a child prodigy, asking for piano lessons at two and progressing from there to French horn, trumpet, and "anything else I could get my hands on". She was only 10 when she first picked up her father's battered Martin D-18 guitar, and just 13 when she published her first song in *Broadside Magazine*. And at age 14, she wrote the song that charted her life's course, a song that Arlene Levinson of the *Associated Press* described as "a white teenager indicting America for its racism and hypocrisy". Janis Ian says "My parents never punished me for telling the truth, no matter how awful it was...I was only punished for lying". Levinson says "*That honesty, its eloquence and depth, may be her chief legacy to contemporary music.*"

Society's Child rocked the nation at a time when the Supreme Court had yet to repeal the laws against interracial marriage, and when civil rights unrest was cresting. It was banned across the country by radio stations as "subversive", a position that was later reversed when the brilliant composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein became Janis' most vocal supporter. The song went to #1 and the teenager was suddenly hanging out with Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, appearing on television shows, and getting hate mail.

A few years later, she had given most of her money away to friends and charities, and was considered a "has-been". With the tenacity and perseverance that would see her through four decades as an artist, she staged her first "comeback" with what would become a classic anthem for disaffected teenagers "**At Seventeen**". Not only did the song win Ian two Grammys, selling over a million copies; it led to a seven-year period of unbridled success that gave her #1 records in every Western country. The "has-been" was suddenly in demand as the first musical guest on the inaugural broadcast of *Saturday Night Live*, the first pop artist to play the Sydney Opera House, and too many other "firsts" to mention. Ian, never one to be comfortable with the status quo, used her new-found popularity to challenge social trends by daring to appear in pants on *The Tonight Show*.

Shortly after her time in the spotlight, Janis Ian disappeared for what would turn out to be almost 10 years. She studied acting with Stella Adler, married, and had plans to start a family, but the marriage ended in a painful divorce. Her accountant duped her, and the IRS came after her for seven years of back taxes that had never been paid. She sold everything...her prized Bosendorfer piano, her house, her guitars, even her publishing catalogue...to settle up. When she moved to Nashville in 1988, she had little more than a couple of guitar and the clothes on her back. She began writing songs for other artists such as Bette Midler, whose cover of "*Some People's Lives*" was the title track of the album, selling over 2 million copies worldwide.

Her next dramatic comeback in 1993 was with *Breaking Silence*, a *tour de force* that not only earned her a ninth Grammy nomination, but announced her sexual orientation to the world. She began talking openly of her lesbianism on controversial radio and TV shows like Howard Stern, and became a champion for issues of the 90's like spousal abuse and AIDS.

The label that released *Breaking Silence* went under, but Janis Ian once again survived. She formed her own label as an independent artist, met the love of her life, bought a big, old rambling house and continued doing what she does best...writing great songs. In between, she somehow became a brilliant guitarist, lauded by none other than Chet Atkins; turned into a prose writer of uncommon depth and humor as monthly columnist for both *The Advocate* and *Performing Songwriter*; began writing short stories (every single one published), culminating in the *Stars* anthology; released her autobiography to rave reviews, and fulfilled her lifelong dream of being a "sideman" by playing all the acoustic guitar parts on Angela Aki's album *Life*.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Grammy Awards

...1975: “Best pop female vocalist- At Seventeen” and “Best engineered recording- Between the Lines”

Grammy Nominations

...1993: “Best Folk Performance- Breaking Silence”
...1981: “Best Children’s Recording - Sesame Street: In House” for Ginny the Flying Girl.
...1978: “Best Jazz Vocal Performance, Duo or Group - Silly Habits” with Mel Torme, from the album Mel Torme & Friends.
...1975: “Album of the Year -Between the Lines”, “Song of the Year - At Seventeen”, and “Record of the Year - At Seventeen”.
...1966: “Best Folk Performance- Janis Ian”.

Honored by

...the New York State Senate in 2006 for her civil rights work.
...Queen Beatrice of Holland for “extraordinary artistic contributions”.
...MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) for “extraordinary contributions”.
...the Elton John Foundation, and by NGLTF, for her AIDs work. (headlined first AIDs benefit in NY, first AIDs benefit in Nashville, first pediatric AIDs benefit nationwide).
...LSU, California for her “artistic contributions”.
...Middle Tennessee University for a “lifetime of commitment to education and diversity in the arts”.
...Women’s Center of Los Angeles for “creative excellence and integrity”.
...Human Rights Campaign Fund, Nashville for her efforts on behalf of gay rights, and her AIDs work.

ASCAP awards for Jesse, At Seventeen.

BMI award for Society’s Child.

Former monthly columnist for

...Performing Songwriter magazine (eight years)
...The Advocate (five years).

Regular lecturer (Master Classes) Berklee College, Boston; yearly lecturer (Art of Performing, Art of Songwriting, Master Class in Artistry) for same.

Guest lecturer for Belmont University, Learning Annex Los Angeles & San Francisco, Virginia State Thespian Conference, various other institutions and schools.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

1951 Born April 7th to Victor (a farmer who became a music teacher) and Pearl (a waitress who became a fundraiser)
1954 Asks for piano lessons
1961 Teaches self guitar
1963 Writes first song, “Hair of Spun Gold”
1965 Writes “Society’s Child”
1966 Records “Society’s Child” and first album, *Janis Ian*.
1967 Leonard Bernstein's *Inside Pop- The Rock Revolution* CBS TV Special showcases Janis and radio reverses its position on "Society's Child". *Janis Ian* album nominated for Grammy. Releases second album, *A Song for All the Seasons of Your Mind*.
1968 Writes 5 songs used in Paul Leaf/Dustin Hoffman film Sunday Father; releases third album, *The Secret Life of J. Eddy Fink*.
1969 Scores film *Four Rode Out* starring Leslie Nielson, Pernell Roberts & Sue Lyon. Releases fourth album, *Who Really Cares*. Leaves music industry and moves to Philadelphia.
1971 Writes *Jesse* and *Stars*.
1972 Moves to Los Angeles; writes the rest of her next album.
1973 Records *Stars* album.
1974 Roberta Flack makes *Jesse* a top ten hit; records *Between the Lines*, with “At Seventeen”.
1975 First musical guest on NBC's premiere broadcast of *Saturday Night Live*; receives 5 Grammy nominations for *Between the Lines* (most for any female performer to that date). Wins two Grammys.
1976 Writes/records six songs for Mare Winningham Movie Of the Week *Freedom*; records *Afertonos*, which stays in top ten of Japanese charts for a year. *Love Is Blind* #1 on Japanese pop charts for six months; album highest selling female artist album in Japan history. Both records still unbroken.; *Afertonos* is platinum in Japan; gold in the US, UK, Holland.
1977 Sings & writes theme for movie *Betrayal* / #1 on the charts in Japan & Europe; records *Miracle Row*. “Will You Dance” #1 in Japan for months.
1978 Grammy nomination for Best Jazz Duet with Mel Torme, singing her song “Silly Habits”.
1979 Records *Night Rains*. Sings “Fly Too High” on soundtrack of Jodie Foster movie *Foxes*; song becomes #1 record worldwide except the United States and Japan.
1980 Composes theme for the Chuck Connors/Glenn Ford film *Virus*
1981 Records *Restless Eyes*; after record company shows their disinterest, leaves CBS and a 5-album, multi-million dollar contract. Moves back to Los Angeles, studies acting with Stella Adler, dance with Dora Krannig.
1983 Buys first computer, an IBM.
1986 Goes to Nashville and begins co-writing in earnest. Songs are covered by Kathy Mattea, Bette Midler, Amy Grant, Nanci Griffith, and a host of others.

- 1992** Contributes *Days Like These* to the soundtrack of John Mellencamp's movie *Falling from Grace*. After a 10 year silence, emerges with *Breaking Silence*; album is nominated for a Grammy.
- 1993** Forms *Rude Girl Records* and begins leasing the album masters she owns to affiliates worldwide as an independent artist.
- 1994** Becomes first "iconoclast" monthly columnist for *The Advocate*; also begins writing a monthly column for fledgling magazine *Performing Songwriter*.
- 1998** Holds first online auction (no, really) and raises \$73,000 with her personal memorabilia to fund a Pearl Foundation scholarship in memory of her mother. The Foundation has raised close to half a million dollars so far.
- 2000** Puts together the *Stars* anthology, a book of science fiction stories by all her favorite authors, based on her songs, co-edited with Mike Resnick and published by DAW/Penguin.
- 2004** Has biggest touring year since 1979; nine countries, over 250 dates. Vows to slow down.
- 2008** Releases *Society's Child: My Autobiography* on Tarcher/Penguin. Simultaneously releases "Best of Janis Ian" two-CD set.
- 2010** Receives Berklee College of Music's first Liberal Arts award, "Janis Ian – an artist for all time."
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JANIS IAN FILM & TELEVISION PROJECTS

- Four Rode Out** (1967) starring Sue Lyons & Pernell Roberts; title, score + 4 songs.
- Sunday Father** (1968) dir. by Paul Leaf, starring Dustin Hoffman; title & score + 6 songs.
- Goodbye Mama** Japanese TV show features "Love Is Blind" and runs for 5 years
- Kishibe No Album** Japanese TV features "Will You Dance" and runs for 5 years.
- The Bell Jar** (1978) starring Julie Harris; title + theme: *Here Comes the Night*.
- Betrayal** (1979) title, theme, 2 additional songs.
- Foxes** (1979) directed by Adrian Lyne, starring Jodie Foster; title "Fly Too High" (with Giorgio Moroder).
- Virus** (1980) title "When the Rainbow's Gone" and theme "You Are Love" (with Teo Macero).
- Freedom** (1981) ABC TV Movie Of the Week starring Mare Winningham; theme, title + six songs.
- Murder She Wrote** (1988) two songs *Charm the Skin Off A Snake & Lucky*.
- Falling From Grace** (1990) directed by John Mellencamp; *Days Like These*
- Kishenobo** (weekly Japanese television drama) (1998/1999) theme song
- Teaching Mrs. Tingle** (1999) top "At Seventeen"
- Desert Blue** (1999) end title "Sweet Misery"
- The Monkey's Mask** (1999) *Fly Too High* remix
- The Little Photographer** (1999) *Society's Child*
- Warrior** (2004) *Night Rains*
- Plastic** (2006) *Matthew*
- Tru Loved** (2007) *Tenderness*
- Nothing Special** (2010) *Days Like These*

Okay, we stopped keeping track at some point, this is just what we remember....

A few television shows that have used Janis' work:

30 Rock; *America's Most Wanted* (Breaking Silence); *American Idol*; *All My Children* (The Last Comeback and Hunger); *Dawson's Creek* (Days Like These and Getting Over You); *Desperate Housewives*; *Entertainment Tonight* (At 17); *Freedom Sings* (Society's Child); *Get Real* (On the Other Side); *General Hospital* (When Angels Cry featured in six separate episodes); *Roseanne* (god & the fbi); *The View* (Society's Child); *Tracy Ullman*; *The Simpsons*; *The Grammy Nominations Special* (Celine Dion singing At Seventeen); *Two Guys & A Girl*; *Popular*.

Commercials/PSA's (singer and/or writer)

Coca-Cola "It's The Real Thing" campaign
 AT&T "Reach Out & Touch Someone" campaign
 Budweiser Light (first radio campaign)
 McDonald's (first Egg McMuffin campaign)
 Nescafe Coffee (theme song)
 The Farm Sanctuary (PSA spot "Mockingbird")
 Second Harvest food bank (PSA spot "The Great Divide")
 The Navy/Department of Defense (PSA spot for families of MIA's "Jesse")
 Fujifilm, JT Products, Ubacha tea Japan (theme songs)

...for the most current list of Awards, Honors, and Highlights including Film and Television work, visit janisian.com and find Ephemera