



Jaco Pastorius

(December 1, 1951 – September 21, 1987)

I first ran into Jaco listening to a friend's album of his one day. Being young and dumb and full of you know what, I first thought it was Stanley, yet there was something different there. Naturally I asked my friend who it was on base and he replied in a joyful voice, "Jaco!", I have been calling him that ever since.

Jaco Pastorius



Pastorius in concert at Naples, Italy in 1986

As times went on, I began to get into Weather Report. Again being young I did not put the two together until I was at a music store reading the back of a Weather report album and there he was as big as day, Jaco Pastorius. I felt I been enlighten and dumb at the same time. I should have known.

This discovery made me pay attention to album covers more. I began to see that many were playing amongst themselves one project after another. Of course it made sense. Where else are they going to get their best ideas and except from. Keeping track of the backs of albums to see who was playing in the group became more than a hobby, but a mission. It gave me a little insight of how the album was going to be before I heard it.

When a new person appeared in the group, I kept track of them. If they hung in there, sooner or later they were going to another group (project) or break out on their own. If I liked them then I knew just about how the album was going to sound. Along with [Stanley Clark](#), Jaco helped to bring the base to the foreground and not only making it a part of the beat, but dam near the beat itself.

Like most greats, Jaco started out young and just kept going until a few big breaks came his way. It did not hurt to have friends as well, especially when one of them is [Pat Metheny](#). He first followed dad on the drums and like many situations that happens in life (tragedy, blessings in disguise) a bad wrist injury sent him packing from the drums into the waiting arms of the bass world. It explains a lot of Jaco's style and drive.



Weather Report

Jaco ignited Weather Report and propelled them into super-group status.



Joni Mitchell

Joni Mitchell searched long and hard for a bass player that didn't exist... until Jaco.



Pat Metheny

Both Pat Metheny and Jaco released debut solo efforts in 1976, with Jaco performing on both.



Guest Appearances

Jaco was sought by many musicians to appear on their records, and there are many great guest appearances out there as a result.

A lot can be said that you are the company you keep. I doubt Jaco and other musicians would have accomplished what they have if it was not them hanging out amongst themselves and having competition against each other. Of course economics played a roll but all and all ideas sprang up, ways of doing things took new roots and it all has become the foundation of innovation to a level that is still climbing to this very day.

Jaco joined the ranks of those leaving us before their time. He was only thirty five and like the others, he still had a lot of stuff to put out there. It shocked me but not like it did with Art Porter. Even though I knew Art had come up the ranks working with other great artist like Ramsey Lewis and Bob James just to name a few.

I had hoped that someone would do a dedication album/CD to Jaco someday. Even though his specialty was so special, I can understand if no one takes it on.



Pastorius performing in New York City (with Jorma Kaukonen in the back, left); March 1986

Bill Sommerville