



Jordan Scott
Owner
4GM Brick and Stone
Austin, TX

Jordan Scott is not only an artist when it comes to brick work and repairs, he is a musical artist as well. This mason’s hands also handle the guitar and piano. In fact, while he loves being a mason and takes his craftsmanship very seriously, Scott could easily replace his trowel with a keyboard. Either way, he’s using his hands to not only fix someone’s 30-year old brick work, but also play some 30-year old rock or blues.

Tell us about your early days and life.
I was born in downtown Dallas. We lived there about five years before we moved to north Texas where I went to school.

Why did your father move from Dallas to further north?
It was a family thing; to be with my mom’s parents.

But you made your way to Austin where you’ve settled. How did this come about?
I’ve been making music since I was a little boy. I had some friends who had some

cheap student housing off Riverside, and they let me crash on their couch for a couple of months until I got an apartment while I focused on the music. But you have to pay the rent. After working for a few people, I just realized I’d do much better starting a company and working for myself.

What’s your musical instrument and what are you into?
I’ve been playing piano and guitar since I was about 12. About 20 years on each of those instruments. I’ve been focusing on the piano the last five years or so. I’m starting to get into Ray Charles and stuff like that. I’m all about the old stuff: Duke Ellington, Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, Beach Boys, Doors, Pink Floyd, Stevie Wonder. I like a few modern bands, but it’s the old school stuff that I really gravitate towards.

Are you part of the Austin music scene?
Oh, yeah. Most of my friends here are musicians, so I go to a lot of shows and I play in a couple of jam nights that I go to every now and then. It’s been really busy with work this summer, so I haven’t gotten to be as involved as I would like, but I try and write everyday. I usually try to have some people come over here and make music once a week or so.

Were you trying to make music a career?
I’ve never wanted to be famous or anything like that, but I would love to put out an album. I’ve been writing music for so long and music has been incorporated in every piece of my life. Even my business card has a background from Pink Floyd’s The Wall. It’s a nice fit.

When did you establish 4GM?
I think it was 2010. That’s when I actually got the website and cards and became serious about it. I might have been open a year or so before that, but I never invested myself like I should have early on.

What was it like becoming an indepen-



Jordan Scott, owner of 4GM Brick and Stone

dent masonry contractor?
In Austin, and I think in the state of Texas, you don’t have to be licensed to do masonry, which is a good and a bad thing. It was good for me because I didn’t have to pay a bunch of start up fees. On the other hand, neither does anyone else. Almost anyone with a truck can start a company and do it legally. The hardest part for me was establishing a reputation because I came from my dad who is a third generation [mason]. Everything he did was five-star. I just tried to bring that with me to Austin and started out doing jobs cheaper than everybody else to get a foot in the door, because no one wants to trust a guy with no reviews. Once I got the call, I could usually talk to them and they could see I had some sense about me, but the hardest part was building up a reputation.

Have you ever seen any work done by another mason that wasn’t up to speed?
Oh, yes. I did a job where I was the third person to come and try and fix this chimney because they got somebody who was not skilled, definitely not a craftsman who put together this kit for an outdoor kitchen. He put it together crooked, there was nothing level, there was nothing plumb about it, it was twisted, it went through the roof wrong. I’ve seen some people do some really bad things. I’ve seen repairs where it literally looked like someone took a handful of mortar and threw it against the wall. I’ve seen people tear apart fireplaces and not be able to put them back together. There’s no license that is required to become a masonry contractor in Texas, so customers really have to do their research on who they hire.

Your father was the third generation mason in your family. Did he expect or encourage you to the fourth?
He always wanted me to do what I love, but he kept reminding me that this is a very good trade. Learning this is better than a lot of jobs out there. I can use this to pursue my passion, which is music. I love my business, I love my customers, but this is a vehicle for me to be out on my own, contribute to the community, but in my spare time work on my music and do the things that I love.

Would you do music full time if you could?
I probably would but I’m not really a huge fan of the limelight. I’m pretty private. But, yeah, probably. That’s my real love in life. That and art. I do a little bit of painting. It’s the music that gives me the chills.

What’s work like for you now? Do you have any helpers?
I have a couple people who help me. I have a guy named Scotty that’s been with me for years. He’s been helping me a lot lately, but most of the time it’s just me. I try to not take on so much work that I overex-

tend myself. I used to have a bad habit of doing that. I felt like I had to take on every single job. I’ve learned to take it down a notch and not overextend myself.

What do you do most of?
Definitely repairs. Every day people call me because they’re trying to put their house on the market, or they just bought a house and something failed on the inspection report on the house. About 80 percent of what I do is masonry repair work because I’m good at it. Not many masons know how to do this - match something that’s 30 or even hundreds of years old. I would love to take it to the highest level one day and do the restoration work on the Alamo or the Texas State Capitol.

One of your specialties is brick staining. Tell us about that part of your work.
It’s by hand, one brick at a time. If you were to spray it, it would get all over the mortar and it would look painted, which would defeat the purpose. I order my stain from the U.K., actually. It’s alcohol-based with pigment powder, the carrier solution and something to make it permanent called the fixing agent. They all have lifetime warranties, so it never fades. The great thing is it can be diluted, so each house I do is completely custom. It’s all about the customer and what they want to do with their home.

Did your dad teach you how to stain brick?
This one I learned all by myself. He taught me a little bit about staining brick to match repair jobs, but then I took it to another level when I started staining entire homes.

Do you have a handy supply of old bricks that you keep handy in case you need them?
I do have a mini brick yard out in the back. I’ve been able to do three or four repairs flawlessly because I had the original brick that hasn’t been made in 20 years. I have a lot of brick.

Do you do anything on the inside of homes?
I’ve done a lot of brick veneers and artificial stone. A lot of fireplaces. I did one job in Houston where the guy said make it look as rough as possible, old world. He said, “I want you to do it like you were drunk.” So that was fun. We’ve done a lot of accent walls. I like to try and save the inside jobs for the winter when it’s cold outside.

Do you get a lot of bid invites?
I get like 60 jobs a week to bid. I prefer the smaller things. I really like to work for the homeowner and talk directly to the person you’re working for.
Jordan Scott of 4GM Brick & Stone is a fourth generation mason contractor in Austin. -dsz



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