

pan podium feature
one to watch

JADEN 'NINJA' HOLDER pan prodigy

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Jaden Holder was nicknamed 'Ninja' by his great grandmother because of the way he moved. He is now four years old and from birth his parents, Crystal and Brent Holder, quickly realised that he had problems with his hearing. They were told by the medical staff at the hospital that he was born with right ear 'Microtia' - which basically means a small ear. Jaden has no right ear canal which has resulted in his hearing being impaired on his right side.

As a result, he experiences problems pronouncing words at times. However, this has never stopped him from doing what he wanted to do. Jaden's love for pan music was evident after his parents had played a steelband panorama DVD and he wanted it be played every morning before attending nursery.

His parents are well established musicians with his father Brent Holder, being the manager of the aspiring CSI Steelband Trust and a former World Steelpan Champion soloist. Brent teaches the art of playing the steelpan in several schools in the borough of Hammersmith and Fulham whilst Crystal is a grade 8th qualified musician and writes music for their orchestra.

Both parents have played for several world class steelbands including Renegades, Phase 11 Pan Groove and Ebony. Brent and Crystal started bringing Jaden to steelpan practice because he would cry incessantly if

they went without him. At practice sessions he would sit and watch the drummer on the drum kit. He studied his every move, every beat. After a good night's sleep he would arise early the following morning and set up his toys in the shape of a drum kit and start playing the beats he had heard the drummer playing the night before at pan practice.

His parents were mesmerized by what they were hearing. Very soon, he picked up a pair of pan sticks and started picking out notes of the gig tunes he had heard at CSI steelband's practice sessions. With a little help, he was playing half the band's repertoire in a relatively short time span.

Initially, Jaden was too shy to play for anyone and would only play in the sanctuary of his home. He would attend practice sessions at the panyard solely for the purposes of listening and learning. When people enquired about his playing skills and were told that he was capable of playing complete tunes on the steelpan, they looked skeptical, stating, 'he is only 4 years old', 'he is so small to be playing', 'you are having us on'. Faced with this dilemma; his parents decided to video record him in action playing a few of his favourite tunes as well as Jaden having a good go at parts of their CSI Steelband Trust's 2009 Panorama tune, 'Magic Drum'. They

uploaded the videos clips of him playing which had lots of people quite shocked. Since then, Brent and Crystal have started receiving requests from Jaden's fans for songs. One thing is for sure; his hearing impairment has not stopped him in anyway doing what he wants musically. On occasions both Brent and Crystal have tried to trick him by teaching him a wrong note or chord of a tune he knows, but he is always quick to point out their errors.

For his entire life Jaden has been surrounded by music. From both his parents as well as his sibling, Brent Junior who is commonly referred to as 'Brenty'. Brenty has also played from a very young age and has performed for CSI Steelband Trust's Junior orchestra in the BAS/CAPCA Junior Panorama Finals.

Visit the links on Brent's Face Book page and You Tube to view young Jaden Holder's unique and mystical playing skills.

