

# jacob sartorius

photos by ryan clemens

article by lauren kovolenko









It's the summer of 2014 in Virginia when 12-year-old **JACOB SARTORIUS'** life would begin to change. Back when the video app Vine was reaching its peak popularity, Jacob spent hours creating his six second videos. As the years went by, he gained popularity rapidly for the hilarious videos he posted. Not long after his popularity spiked, Jacob released his first music single, "Sweatshirt," by May of 2016. This song created a mass curiosity about young Sartorius. So much so that Google announced he was the ninth most searched musical artist of that year.

When the Vine app closed down in 2017, Jacob switched over to Musical.ly (now TikTok). Many released EPs and online content kept his popularity with his dedicated fans afloat for the years to come, but to the general public, he would soon fade into the background.

Fast forward to 2020. A lot has changed for the world and for Jacob too. He's no longer just the "Sweatshirt kid" who experienced loads of anonymous hate online. Jacob has grown creatively and spiritually. Now he has full control of his music with no record label and new stories to tell.

Jacob has come to terms with himself. For people who stopped listening after "Sweatshirt," he would now reintroduce himself. "It's the same Jacob, just a little bit older – six years actually. I'm still making music, still writing, and I would be very appreciative if you checked out [the new music]. If not, all good, I hope you're doing well," he says in happy spirits with a laugh.

The early years of fame were not the easiest for young Jacob. From the mass media responses came lots of hate. All these years allowed himself to reflect on his experience online, where he mentions from the hate, "I went deep within myself and I really asked myself, 'What do you want to be doing?' I wanted to be making music, touring, and getting better at something." The hate took a toll on his mental health for a while, but he never wanted to give up his dream. He would rise above it and knew deep down he was "always spreading a positive message" in his content and music. This made it most important to keep doing what he was doing.

Sartorius can now laugh at the hate, "I don't have any resentment towards anybody who ever hated me. I actually am thankful for those times, and I think that added to the experience. I'm just grateful to be here and still be able to talk to really cool outlets like Unclear." (Thanks, Jacob!) "This is a dream come true, and I am getting to still do it and for that I am forever grateful." Jacob wants to be the example for those who want to rise again from the shadows, "I'm a huge fan of comebacks, rooting for the underdog. I always believe that it's never too late for anybody. Like, 'Okay, you can still do it! Nothing can stop you.' And if there's somebody out there that could say that, that would be really cool."

Jacob's growth and the years since sparked the creation of what he calls the best





music in his entire career. Pulling from personal experiences and reaching adulthood, his most recent EP released in October of 2021, *Lost But Found*, touches on the different moments of his life. He reflects on how his creative approach changed now that he writes his own songs.

“Being in that process [of writing my own songs], and especially through quarantine that’s when I had a demo set up which is a microphone, computer, Apollo Interface, and headphones. In there I was able to work on a lot of ideas. That’s where a lot of *Lost But Found* originally came from (“Trapped In The Car,” “For Real,” “Lifesallgood”). The creative process has changed dramatically — it went from something that was just making songs that sound cool to really opening it up and finding strength in the things that I might consider a weakness in myself. *Lost But Found* was a three year process, and one of those songs started in 2018. This EP has really been the soundtrack to my life for the last year.”

Sartorius mentions, “I’m a big fan of ‘Hey, Hello, Goodbye,’ written with my friend Dempsey Hope.” He says his favorite line from it is: “Everybody’s fake, I’ve come to the conclusion I do not want to stay.” This line is the most relatable in his experience, “It’s talking about LA Life and a party, and it’s explaining that feeling of when you walk into a social event/party/kickback/hangout and you’re just feeling a little bit anxious and the conversations are pretty surface level. I think that song speaks to that experience.”

Fans should know that Jacob thinks of himself as a storyteller through his music. “I have been blessed to be able to tell a story. [...] It’s a process of growing, I’m sharing real experiences from my life and real stories. Putting words to the real feelings I experience. These are real universal emotions, and I’m putting it out there for people who might be alone or feel like they don’t have someone speaking their voice. Someone who can listen to my music and say ‘I feel the exact same way’ — hopefully I can be that for somebody.” He’s done a great job of this over the years; the outpouring support on his social media proves just that fact!

Not only has Jacob been storytelling through his music, but also through other avenues. In January, he released a documentary, titled *BREATHE*. In this 25-minute picture, we follow Sartorius as he travels from LA to Amsterdam to meet Dutch wellness guru, motivational speaker, and extreme athlete Wim Hof (AKA The Ice Man). “The experience got me completely out of my comfort zone and it kind of threw me into something that I wanted to do because I conceptualized this documentary and produced it. [...] I just wanted to shine light on somebody I thought was really cool, [Wim Hof] who’s out there breaking world records and really making it his mission to heal others.” Watch this documentary on his YouTube channel today; it truly is an eye-opener!





*"These are real universal emotions. and  
I'm putting it out there for people who  
might be alone or feel like they don't  
have someone speaking their voice."*







Outside of creating music, Jacob has refocused on his own self-health, “I’ve been doing breath work, and I’m passionate and hopeful that it could maybe help others heal. Breath work is one of those things along with cold exposure, like taking ice baths, it’s all for reducing stress. I started going outside more, going to more parks and getting fresh air, which was something I wasn’t aware of before. I’ve switched up some things.” Quarantine certainly pushed our creative boundaries for finding ways to keep our mental health in check. For Jacob, it was a positive discovery.

Jacob’s connection with his fans has been top priority since day one. “I try to check in with at least a couple on DMs daily or hit a livestream. Just be there for my fans outside of just through music. I want to build that personal relationship with my fans,” he shares. “How this worked out is through YouNow and Vine and Musical.ly/TikTok, using those platforms to connect with people in my day to day life. I’ve been blessed to have the best family [online and off].”



It's 2022. Sartorius has plans to share even more music with his fans and you! "The next EP I'm working is in the finishing stages. It's a lot different than *Lost But Found*, but it also builds from it. I think LBF was a time where it's bouncing between those two places of being lost but also found and a constant battle of where I fit in between those two. This next project is that 'in between' and finding somewhat of a peace, but also just being aware of what could be that reason for falling between those emotions. I think these are really relatable songs and a different vibe. We have some songs with ukulele; I haven't done that before! [...] I'm an independent artist. I'm not signed to a label, so I'm just having fun and moving at my own pace. I am certainly really excited for this next EP!"

A song Jacob most recently teased on his social media, "Fear of Intimacy," just dropped on February 2nd. This song is a preview of what to expect on this up and coming EP. The track tackles Jacob's fear of commitment and the anxieties that come with it. If you're into some seriously good melodies, check it out! We are super excited to hear the rest of the songs!

Where the future takes him is sure to include new avenues of expression. "I want to keep experimenting with my creativity. I'm probably going to do another documentary on someone else who I'm super passionate about. I love producing, creating, conceptualizing and being a part of that creative process, as well as music. I've also been dabbling in acting — I filmed a movie in the UK (*The Loneliest Boy In The World*) and that will be out this year. I'm having fun and I'm trying to just find my flow. I think it's a time where I'm figuring things out, [...] with the goal to really impact people." Follow Sartorius on his socials to keep up to date on these projects: [@jacobsartorius](https://www.instagram.com/jacobsartorius).

Jacob recognizes many people struggle with mental health, and "I think we are going to do some big moves that could heal others at a deeper level. Breathing is free — if one person can find out about that [through my documentary] who struggles with anxiety and depression that could bring them some peace, that's a win to me. I want to keep doing more things that are genuinely impacting people and changing the world."

As we wrapped up our time together, Jacob concluded with some sound advice for our readers. "There is always that light at the end of the tunnel. It can feel sometimes like you're trapped, or in my personal experience it can feel like you're defeated. [...] I think talking helps. Also, being a best friend to yourself — how you would treat a best friend if they were going through something, you're there for them. If you can be that way for yourself, do that. Be as gentle as possible. Understand you have the strength within yourself to get through anything." We couldn't agree more.

Deep Within all of us  
I believe there's a  
lighthouse of creativity  
surrounded by waves of  
judgement. Often times  
people let that judgement  
kill the light. I've always  
wondered what would  
happen if we would  
walk in the faith of the light?

*[Handwritten signature]*

