

# Exclusive Interview: Joey McGee – Maroon Weekly

## Exclusive Interview: Joey McGee

By [Maroon Weekly](#) on February 10, 2016



Joey McGee is a singer-songwriter with a sound like a mixing pot. His self-titled “folk rock groove” sound fuses gospel, jazz, and blues influences into a unique blend that shouts to be heard. Mostly performing in and around Bryan, TX, it’s easy to forget McGee’s New Orleans roots. McGee strives to bring “Cajun spice” to Texas through his rhythmic music—and does not disappoint. Lately, McGee has been experimenting with his sound. His latest studio project, *Terlingua Taproot*, hints at Southern country influences and a different vibe compared to his earlier works. We sat down with McGee to discuss his musical influences, evolving sound, and personal journey along the way.

**MW:** What artists or inspirations have helped shape the sound of your music?

**JM:** Good question! My influences are constantly changing, the music I wrote a few years ago is pretty different from what I’m writing today. Currently I’m exploring a raw sound –dirty, Southern, and real—and I’m drawn to stuff from Gary Clark Jr., alt-country music from the 90s – (think Whiskeytown, Driveby Truckers), and I’m digging songwriters like Jason Isbell, Chris Stapleton, and a bit of Lydia Loveless. There’s a lot that goes into the mix!

**MW:** So you're a New Orleans-native, but what brought you to the Brazos Valley?

**JM:** It was the invitation from my buddy of mine, Adam Saenz. My wife and I were visiting the Brazos Valley in 2007 and he said something like, "You guys should think about moving to Bryan. It's a cool little town." He didn't know it at the time, but I'd been contemplating moving back south. Prior to that, I'd been living in Pittsburgh. I moved there after living in San Antonio (left NOLA and moved there after high school), and I thought I'd only be in Pennsylvania for a couple of years. Hah! Life has its twists and turns! More than 15 years later, I was quite ready to get back south. Pittsburgh is a cool town, but they don't have breakfast tacos and abundant sunshine! It's good to be back in Texas!

**MW:** Where are you getting inspiration for your latest studio project, Terlingua Taproot?

**JM:** The spark of inspiration stems from conversations I've had with my friend Todd Anguspaal Reynolds. He's a brassy rancher and painter who owns a place north of Caldwell named Terlingua. During one of my visits there, he challenged a body of work of mine—I think the words "that sucks" were used—and it jarred something in me. It helped me to realize I had been coasting and not really tapping into the emotions and inspirations of why I write and perform music. Sometimes we need a good splash of cold water to help us wake up from our lethargy!

Anyway, those visits to Terlingua (and conversations I've had with other creatives) have helped me to tap back into the rootedness of who I am—a Southern, Creole-Cajun musician dude working through my hang ups and trying to make the world a better place along the way. These songs are a good reflection of where I am in life: they feel like rich, warm, black earth in your hands—it's a bit smelly and messy—but filled with lots of goodness! I think folks will resonate with that.

Joey McGee will be performing live on February 12 at New Republic Brewery in College Station, TX starting at 7:30 pm.

