

## Jimmy 'Spoon Man' Cruise

Jeannette Cooperman | Sep. 28, 2008



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### **How did this begin?**

I wanted drums. I fell in love with music when I was 9, and the spoons ended up becoming my imaginary drum set.

### **How did you learn?**

Both my grandpas played; I'm from Michigan. But mainly I've taught myself.

### **What's the history of spoon-playing?**

Well, it was the ancient Egyptians who came up with formal utensils, and ever since there have been utensils, people have been clacking them together.

### **You played for Mary Ann from "Gilligan's Island" and a string of other celebs. How have they reacted?**

John Davidson tried to play. Luckily I had trainer spoons with me; anybody can play those. President Ford just kind of looked at me like, "What are you doing?"

### **When you performed in Moscow, you were part of a variety show?**

I was one of the novelty acts. Musicians, gymnasts, baton twirlers, me.

### **So how does it feel to be a novelty?**

Well, it gives me a certain niche, but on the other hand, it scares people away. If I try to book myself as a comedian, people can relate to that. When you say "spoon player," most people think of an old guy sitting in a chair.

### **So what do you put as "occupation" on your income tax form?**

Entertainer.

### **What's the connection between your career and your faith?**

I've been playing for 20 years. I'm married with five children and a mortgage, and I support my family by

playing the spoons. If that's not a testimony to Christ, I don't know what is.

**You sometimes use your performances in Catholic schools to talk about Eucharist or other sacraments. Is there something almost sacramental about transforming such a plain, everyday object as a spoon into music?**

People have asked me, "Why don't you put together electric spoons, something like that?" I could, but that takes away from the simplicity. Everybody can relate to a spoon, and that's what makes it somewhat magical. It's just two spoons. That's it. [Pause.] Although I also play forks, knives and pie servers.

**Is Cruise a stage name?**

Krzewski is my real name. I'm a Polish spoons player. I only wish I could have played for Pope John Paul II.

**Has it ever been hard to muster the energy to perform?**

My daughter had a tumor on her kidney when she was 6. That was a trying time for me, seeing all these healthy kids, and my daughter's in the hospital bald, and I've got to wear a happy face. But we saw Christ in people's kindness, and now I feel more confident in life, that the Lord is always going to be there.

**You pray before every performance. What do you ask the Holy Spirit?**

Make me an instrument.

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