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Bill Curreri Extended Bio

As John Lennon famously said, "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." So it was with Bill Curreri, whose compelling life story, is the kind of tale upon which movies are made and books are written.

Raised by Italian-American immigrants in a Greenwich Village tenement, Bill always dreamed of a career in music and of someday being recognized as an accomplished singer-songwriter. But as often happens, life intervened and Bill put aside his musical aspirations in order to fulfill his responsibilities to family and friends. And it is only now, at the age of 64, after pursuing successful careers in advertising and academia, that Bill is finally getting the opportunity to realize his childhood dream of creating music that is not only generating widespread critical acclaim but also reaching an appreciative international audience. Against all odds, Bill is gaining considerable notoriety and attention as one of today's most talented new artists in the Rock Americana genre of singer-songwriters.

Bill's music has captured the interest of some of today's most accomplished "session players" and Grammy-award winning musicians, several of whom worked with Bill in 2012 to help create his debut album aptly titled, "Long Time Gone." The album has generated significant radio play both in the U.S. and abroad. Bill's second album "Son Of An American Dream," a personal affirmation of his life-journey back to his childhood love of music, is set for release later this year along with a music video of the album's title track. Both the CD and video will feature the same talented group of musicians that performed on Bill's first album.

"Different periods in our lives come with responsibilities to loved ones that simply cannot be ignored," says Bill. "I have no regrets about any of the decisions I've made in my life. But I'm especially proud that I stayed true to my dream after all these years and I am sincerely grateful for the opportunity today to share my music with audiences around the world. It's been a long journey back to where I wanted to be in the first place. However, realizing my dream at this stage of my life after such a long time gone only makes my recent successes that much sweeter. For me, it's been a hard road home."

Bill now lives in Greenwich Village with his partner Lydia Yu in a brownstone just five blocks from where he grew up and on the same street where he attended

grammar school. Today, as he walks the very same streets of his beloved childhood, Bill can still be seen reflecting intensely on new songs ideas with melodies and musical arrangements swirling furiously in his head. For Bill, his love for music is still as intense as ever.

Growing Up

Bill was raised in a tight-knit Italian-American immigrant family in the historic era of 1950s and '60s Greenwich Village, New York. As the Neapolitan folk music of his ancestors played in the background of his grandparents' third-floor tenement apartment, the streets of Greenwich Village were coming alive with the early sounds of rock and folk. And as Bill delivered clothing for his father's dry cleaning business and pizza for Arturo's Restaurant, it was not unusual to see some of music's most iconic folk artists performing in the Village's cafes, street corners and parks. The then-unknown Bob Dylan could be seen on occasion playing guitar in Washington Square Park and during Bill's teenage years, rock icons like David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Roger McGuinn, John Sebastian and Richie Havens could be seen walking the Village's then cobblestone streets and frequenting many of the area's iconic cafes and clubs.

The Curreri family's small New York City apartment was short on privacy but long on hard work. Bill's grandparents lived two floors below and the building was filled with people from the same small mountaintop town near Naples where his mother was born.

"They never talked about their hardships," Bill remembers. "You had to pull it out of them to talk about the Depression. It was in their DNA. They were wired differently. They never complained." Their apartment building was a place where no one locked their doors and "you knew what everyone was making for dinner that night."

It was through this backdrop that Bill learned the benefits of hard work and perseverance. Most mornings, he was awake by 4 am to study, long before his parents and siblings got out of bed. Because of his hard work, Bill was named valedictorian of his grammar school graduating class and was accepted at one of New York City's most prestigious high schools where he studied and read Latin and Classical Greek language and culture. This included translating both Virgil's "The Aeneid" and Homer's, "The Odyssey" into English.

Bill's Musical Roots

It was because of Bill's work ethic - and his persistence - that his lifelong dream of writing, recording and playing music became a reality. As he famously likes to say, he never takes "no" for an answer. As a boy, he wasn't selected for the school choir. Instead of giving up, he snuck into rehearsals and managed to join anyway. There wasn't enough money for Bill to take guitar lessons as a teenager. Instead of quitting, he taught himself at night, learning how to play while the rest of the family was sleeping. And without any real musical training, Bill started writing his own songs as a 17 year old.

Even at a young age, it was becoming clear that Bill was a talented singer and lyricist. Through the folk music of Dylan, he came to appreciate that music could be an art form that was meaningful to the listener. From his high school reading of Homer, Milton and Shakespeare, he came to embrace the written word and the beauty of language. From the intricate and varied instrumentation of movie scores and composers like Miklos Rosza, he came to realize that music could evoke changing moods and feelings. And from his grandfather, he learned the sensory depth of music in lunchtimes spent in his grandparents' kitchen listening to Neapolitan folk songs while eating peaches dipped in red wine.

During his teenage years, Bill, his brother, Bob and a group of friends formed a band called The Village Merchants that played regularly at legendary (and not so legendary) venues throughout the New York City area. Bill continued to perform and write music during his college years at NYU and ultimately formed the band Stillwater, which picked up a considerable following and recognition from fellow musicians.

At age 27, Mercury Records offered Bill and the band a recording contract on the strength of a tape that they had recorded in the studio. Bowing to family pressures and a promising career in advertising, Bill reluctantly said no to the deal. But once again refusing to take "no" for an answer, Bill promised himself that one day... somehow, someday... he would return to his first love, music.

Bill's career

Bill spent the next three decades pursuing a successful career in marketing, advertising, Internet consulting and academia. But through it all, he maintained an

in-house recording studio and continued to write songs over the years that no one, except a few family members and friends, ever heard.

Several years after retiring from his career in marketing, Bill began teaching remedial reading as an Adjunct Professor at John Jay College in New York City and helped many of his students pursue their dream of getting a college education. Many of them were immigrants or the children of immigrants. "They had a dream and that's what America is about," Bill said. "The American dream lives on from generation to generation." In watching their resilience, Bill saw a reflection of himself as a young man. And finally, after a decade of teaching, Bill decided to return to his own passion... to his own dream—to his music.

Bill's Dream

In September 2012, at age 63, Bill released his first solo album, "Long Time Gone." The album has generated airplay on 47 radio stations in 25 states and has been played in countries around the world. With some of the industry's top artists including two Grammy-Award winning musicians backing Bill up, "Long Time Gone" has received considerable critical acclaim. Bill's following and presence continue to grow.

Later this year, Bill is set to release his second album "Son of An American Dream." It brings together a lifetime of experience and musical reflection. Bill is constantly writing and recently finished shooting a full concert-length, music video at the Bitter End in New York City.

"My parents came to this country with a dream for a better life," Bill says. "And like those before and after them, through hard work and perseverance they achieved their American dream both for themselves and for their children. And I will always be grateful that whatever success I might enjoy as a musician is due in large part to their sacrifices, to their struggles, and to their dreams."

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