

## **BILLY MANN**

The work of Billy Mann displays a young artist with a prolific gift. His songs find stylistic influences in so many musical genres that he might well be the ultimate fusion of contemporary songwriting. From the folk tradition he understands the power of being lyrically simple, pure and honest. From Rock and Roll, he displays the power of high energy and performance. From the legacy of R&B he exhibits the essential expressions of soul and passion, anchored by a groove. With his self-titled debut ready for release in early 1996, Billy Mann proves himself a superb scholar and synthesizer of these legacies, wherein the music and the man are intertwined.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Billy Mann was surrounded by a stimulating, aural landscape throughout his early years. A child of 70's radio, he pressed his ear to the receiver and absorbed Carole King, Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel, and the Doobies. Though he considers himself primarily a singer / songwriter in the classic sense, he is a multi-instrumentalist who began playing piano at age 5, then guitar, bass, harmonica, flute, and anything else he could get his hands on.

His development as a songwriter followed the purest method of maturation imaginable - practice, practice, practice. The lessons learned while attending Philadelphia's High School for Creative and Performing Arts, having endured the war scars which so often come with coffeehouse performances, and having to rely on odd jobs and busking for income all threw Billy Mann into a lifestyle of trial and error. After collaborating with dozens of performers, now 25, Billy is recognized for his talent as a songwriter. Many of the compositions he has previously penned, and has co-written with others recently, will find release on projects across the musical spectrum in the coming year.

Boston, San Francisco, Miami, London and then New York witnessed the young artist strive for just one chance to grab his future from the shelf. It was in one of New York's thousands of stairwells that a meeting occurred, serving as a major catalyst in his story. A man, having heard the notes of song and a truly tranquilizing voice rising from below, curiously stepped out of a hallway and into a stairwell. Coming closer, the man found that the music was the work of a tall, curly-haired singing stranger. Unknowingly, Billy entertained the one-man audience, who turned out to be multi-platinum hit producer Ric Wake (Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, Hall & Oates). Days later, Billy Mann was in the studio recording material for the veteran producer. He recalls, "Next thing you know, I was sitting in a state of the art recording studio on Long Island with this heavy super-producer going through my songbook. It was surreal." The relationship has yielded the arrival of Billy Mann as a respected new songwriter and artist, in addition to the formation of a new A&M label DV8, of which Billy will be the first full-length release.

Billy Mann is a songwriter and artist who exhibits the rare ability to write material in the first person, subtly sharing emotion, while not emitting cliches. His tales of love, fear, angst, and strength bring out his humanity, inviting us into the world of his characters and we savor our ability to relate. Not only will his lyrics and melodies stay with you hours after the stereo stops playing, but they always reveal more depth with every listen.

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