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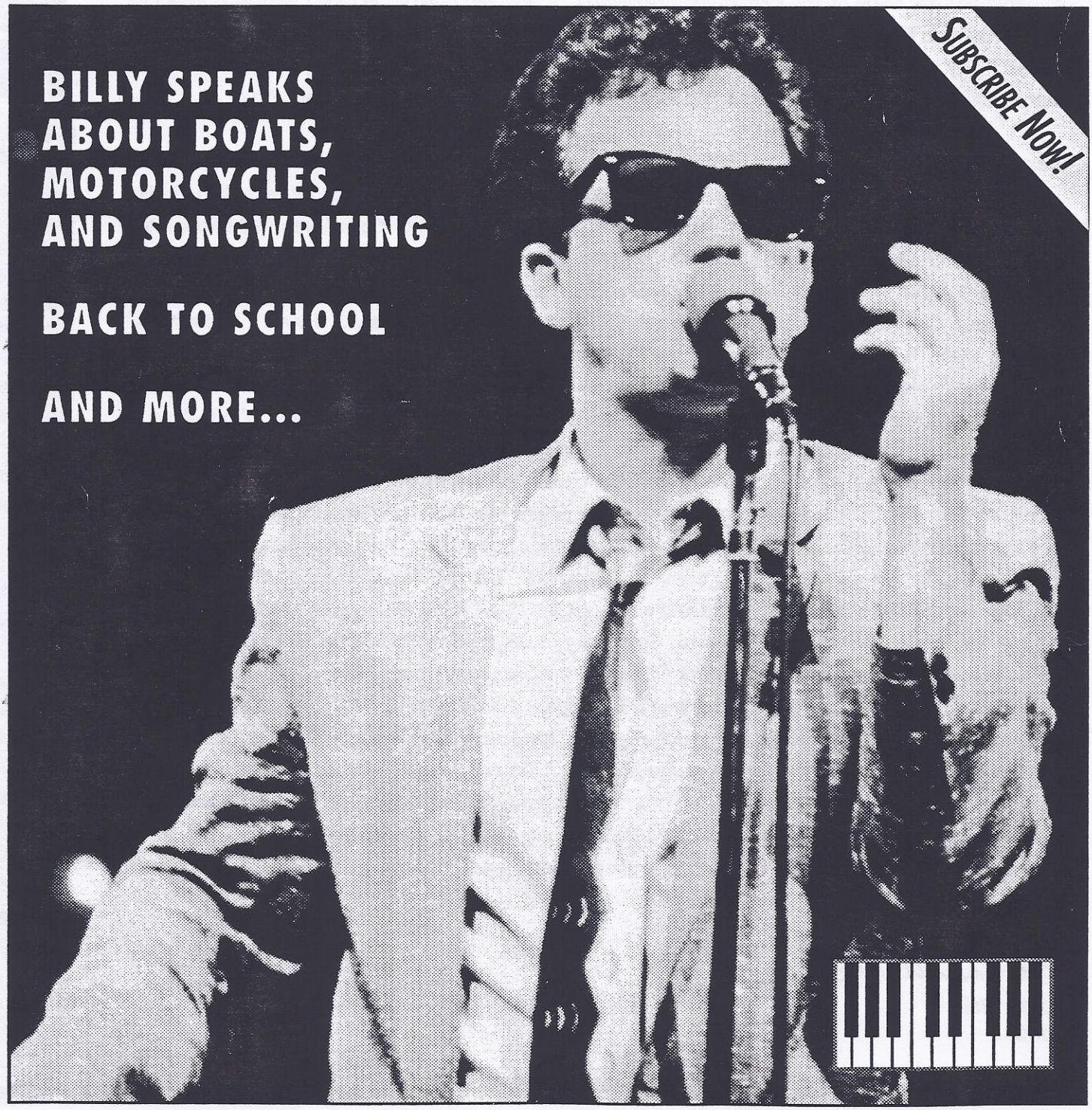
STREETLIFE SERENADE

A Newsletter For Billy Joel Fans



BILLY SPEAKS ABOUT BOATS, MOTORCYCLES, AND SONGWRITING

BACK TO SCHOOL

AND MORE...

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HONESTY EDITOR'S NOTE

Thanks to those who contributed to this issue: Mike Stutz for his touching story (we're pleased to report Mike has made a full recovery), Iris Gmachl for photos (we'll be running Iris' account of **Billy's** 1994 European tour in the next issue), and those of you who sent in your lists of favorite **Joel** songs. Keep 'em coming. They're fun to read.

Since all of you obviously care about **Billy's** music (and lyrics), I urge you to check out the January/February issue of *The Performing Songwriter*. It featured one of the best Q&As with **Billy** I've read. Thanks to the nature of the magazine, it cuts right to the heart of the matter: songwriting. If you missed it, try writing to The Performing Songwriter, P.O. Box 158159, Nashville, Tennessee 37215, Phone (800) 883-7664, E-mail PerfSong@aol.com or Web Site http://songs.com/noma/tps.

Lucky writer Bill DeMain accompanied **Billy** to his writing session with Elton John late last year. As DeMain describes it: "(After lunch) **Joel** then brought me along to The Hit Factory recording studio, where he was co-writing a song with Elton John. Standing in the control room, I watched through the glass and listened as these two giants, seated at dual grands, hashed out the gospelly music to a Bernie Taupin lyric called *Red, White and Blues*. Elton sang a line, then asked **Billy** how he'd phrase it. **Billy** said, 'I'm hearing a darker chord on the second measure.' Elton said, 'Try an E in the bass.' And so it went. It was an incredible moment." **Billy** describes writing with Elton: "It's interesting, I'm staying here (a New York hotel) with my daughter and I talked to her about this project I'm doing with Elton. Now Elton gets lyrics from Bernie Taupin and says to me, 'See what you think.' I'm looking at these lyrics and I can't make head or tail of how to do this, because what it means to me is that the music is secondary to the lyric. In other words, the music isn't the motivational beginning of the song getting written. That's how Elton does it. And that's actually the traditional way to write a song, is to take a poem and set it to music. That's how a lot of songs got written. A lot of writers write like that. I'm the opposite. So as I was saying about my daughter - she makes up songs all the time. She'll walk into a room and she'll start singing and she's got this great voice. She's nine years old and she's got this big Ronnie Spector kind of vibrato. She's very musical, perfect pitch, terrific musical instincts, she keeps time on two and four, which for a little white kid is pretty good. I said, 'Look at these lyrics and make up a song about this,' and she started singing then she said, 'Wait, where is the music?' And I said, 'There is no music yet, it's just the lyrics. That's how Elton writes.' And she said, 'I don't understand how he can do that.' So I realize she's a lot like me (laughs). I don't understand how it's done so I'm going to go into the studio today, and I'm going to see how Elton does it. Because he sees these lyrics and he write music, which I think is fantastic. I'm exactly the other way. I'd like to write a piece of music and send it to Bernie, and say, 'Here, you put some words to that...'"

Happy reading.

Suzan Wells

Suzan Wells
Editor

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Maritime Music Inc. has abandoned ship at its former 57th Street Manhattan headquarters and has now dropped anchor on the East End of Long Island. Please address all future inquiries and correspondence to: Maritime Music Inc., 280 Elm Street, Southampton, New York 11968.

On March 29, Buena Vista will re-release the 1988 animated film, *Oliver & Company*. In this modernized, New York version of Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, **Billy** provides the voice of the Artful Dodger - a streetwise mutt. Bette Midler, Cheech Marin, and Joey Lawrence also provide voices. **Billy** sings one song, *Why Should I Worry?,* written by Charlie Midnight and the late Dan Hartman. Walt Disney Records will re-release the soundtrack on compact disc and cassette (with "bright, new packaging matching the film poster art"). There will also be an *Oliver & Company Read-Along*.

Billy voiced his character back in 1986, shortly after the birth of daughter Alexa. "I wanted to be a hero to her more than I wanted to be a star in a movie. I knew by the time we were through making it she'd be old enough to see it. It was perfect timing... If I do this character well enough and it's a Disney classic, I will last as that dog maybe even longer than my records. Who knows?"

According to Jeffrey Katzenberg (then Chairman of Walt Disney Studios, now the "K" in Dreamworks SKG), "Everyone who was first choice for the voices in *Oliver* accepted without telephone torture, including **Billy Joel** who read for the part over the phone after being faxed a page from the script." Director George Scribner said of **Billy**: "It worked out great. He could really act, and as he got into the part he defined the character and we started rewriting for him." The 72-minute film - Disney's 27th full-length animated feature - premiered at the Ziegfeld Theatre in Manhattan on November 13, 1988 (with a wide release on November 18). The original soundtrack (which officially launched Walt Disney Records) was released on November 11. It was Disney's first major musical since *The Jungle Book* in 1967 and went on to gross over $50 million in U.S. theatres, making it the highest grossing animated feature up till that time (long since surpassed by *The Lion King*). Peter Travers, then film critic for *People*, said: "...Dodger (is) the coolest of canines as acted and sung by **Billy Joel**. Warbling the jaunty *Why Should I Worry?*, **Joel** is the essence of street savoir faire." Jami Bernard of *The New York Post* said, "The *Why Should I Worry?* number, sung while hopping blithely over taxicabs, is a rascally success."

Apparently, **Billy** achieved his original goal of impressing his daughter. As **Billy** told *Entertainment Tonight* following the star-studded benefit premiere, Alexa, then almost 3, kept saying: "That sounds like Daddy!" Finally, it sank in, and she told her dad: "You're a nice dog." *(People 11/21/88, The New York Post 11/15/88)*

SOMETIMES A **FANTASY**

Other news from the film front: **Billy's** house in Martha's Vineyard appears in the Paramount film *Sabrina*. It plays Harrison Ford's seaside cottage (where he romances Julia Ormond). The house garnered glowing reviews. *Newsday* hailed its "waterfront vista that belongs on the last page of the Conde Nast Traveler," and *The New York Post* called it an "adorable vacation home."

Look for **Billy** in the *Sesame Street* video section featured in the Sony Wonder release *Do the Alphabet* with **Billy Joel**. Sony Wonder has licensed a home video line from the Children's Television Workshop (makers of *Sesame Street*). *(Billboard, 11/18/95)*

The May 11 issue of *Billboard* will include a special tribute section devoted to the career of producer Phil Ramone.

Billy donated $1,000 to Campaign '95, the shared war chest for Democratic candidates in East Hampton, New York. Other celebrity contributors were Alec Baldwin, Eli Wallach and Tony Roberts. *(East Hampton Star 12/14/95)*

Billy and Elton's *Spring of '95* tour was the seventh biggest tour of the year, grossing $22.8 million. Rounding out the top ten were The Eagles, the Grateful Dead, R.E.M., Jimmy Page/Robert Plant, Van Halen, Tom Petty, Boyz II Men, Elton John solo, and Alan Jackson. *(Performance)*

On November 1, President Clinton signed into law the recording industry's historic Digital Performance Right in Sound Recordings Act of 1995. The law grants record labels and featured artists a right to control performances of their works by digital audio transmission. H.R. 1506, the House version of the bill sponsored by Rep. Carlos Moorhead (R-Cal), was passed on October 17. S.227, the Senate version co-sponsored by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Cal), passed on August 8. **Billy** had been a supporter of the legislation (see Fall '95 issue). Labels and artists will split future royalties, estimated in the millions annually.

Keith Lockhart, the 35-year-old conductor of the Boston Pops, told *USA Weekend (12/5-12/17)* he'd be willing to invite certain rock stars to perform with his symphony orchestra. His wish list includes **Billy**, Elton, Paul Simon, and Whitney Houston.

Billy took third place in the Favorite Male Artist category in *The Island-Ear's* annual readers' poll. Neil Young and Tom Petty finished first and second. *The Island-Ear* is a weekly Long Island music publication. (February 19-March 3, 1996)

SOMETIMES A **FANTASY**

Bobby Thrasher, longtime associate of **Billy's** and production manager for the *Face to Face* tour, picked up an Addy Award from the American Advertising Federation. The award was given to Bobby and Perri Entertainment for excellence in design of **BJ**/EJ tour passes. *(Pollstar, 11/20/95)*

VH1 has acquired rights to episodes of *The Beat Club*, a German music show from the '60s and '70s. It was originally set to premiere on March 10 with an hour-long program featuring **Billy**, but that was postponed. Stay tuned to VH1 for a new premiere date.

Rocket Man: The Encyclopedia of Elton John has just been published by Greenwood Press in the U.S. It was co-authored by Claude Bernardin and Tom Stanton, publisher of the Elton John fanzine *East End Lights*. We have not seen the book but have been informed that **Billy** is mentioned throughout. For more information, write to Tom Stanton at 1603 South University Drive, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104. Phone 313-995-5517 or fax: 313-995-5778.

Diana Ross headlined the Halftime Show at Super Bowl XXX but only after Elton, **Billy** and Paul Simon turned it down, according to *Variety* columnist Mike Fleming.

WBAB's 15th annual Rock Marathon for Charity Begins at Home raised $124,566 from December 26-30. The proceeds will be split among 12 charities including The Nature Conservancy, Long Island Association for AIDS Care, and Long Island Cares. **Billy** phoned in his support and donated a rare motorcycle to be raffled away. Excerpts from his phone conversation begin on page 16.

Over Thanksgiving weekend, WPLJ radio in New York, counted down the top 500 songs of all time according to their listeners. The Top 5: *Hotel California, Mony Mony* by Billy Idol, *Piano Man, In Your Eyes*, and *Escape (The Pina Colada Song)*. Go figure.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Billy is on the road again, touring colleges and universities with his Evening of Questions & Answers. Dates have included:

1/14 Univ. of South Florida, Tampa
1/16 Florida State Univ., Tallahassee
1/18 Univ. of Florida, Gainesville
1/27 & 1/28 Trenton State Univ., Trenton, NJ
1/30 Notre Dame Univ., S. Bend, IN
2/1 C.W. Post College, Brookville, NY
2/7 South Connecticut State, New Haven
2/9 Univ. of Connecticut, Storrs
2/22 Hobart & Wm. Smith College, Geneva, NY
2/24 Univ. of Rochester, Rochester, NY
2/29 Mt. Holyoke/Amherst, S. Hadley, MA

EVERY YEAR'S A SOUVENIR

BY MIKE STUTZ

Every big **Billy** fan has their own personal **Billy** story. Many stories are about how they were able to meet and talk with **Billy**. Others are about how his music affected their lives. Some stories are special - and I like to think that my story is one of these.

My name is Mike Stutz. I am a 21-year-old college student at the University of Miami, and I am originally from Southeastern Minnesota. To start off with, I would like to tell you how I became interested in **Billy's** music. In 10th grade, a girl I had a crush on liked his music. What I ended up doing was buying the *Greatest Hits* sheet music to learn how to play *Piano Man* and impress her. This was no easy task, seeing that I have never had any piano lessons. I ended up teaching myself the piano, and impressed many more people than I had originally set out to impress. I liked **Billy's** music so much, I ended up buying ALL of his sheet music, and now can play over 60 of his songs.

In high school, my name became synonymous with **Billy Joel**. I performed great **Billy** hits at choir concerts like *Scenes From an Italian Restaurant* and *Angry Young Man*, and people loved it! I had my senior picture *(right)* look exactly like the *Greatest Hits* album cover, and my yearbook quote was the song *Souvenir*.

After graduation, I went to a local community college, and would perform **Billy** songs before choir - usually getting the choir to clap and sing along! I ended up performing many more songs in the following year and a half, such as *Honesty*, *She's Always A Woman*, and the *Root Beer Rag*. Then, the summer of '94 came along, and I finally got to see **Billy** perform live - with Elton John! After waiting eight hours to get tickets to the Ames, Iowa, *Face to Face* show, my friend and I got 16 tickets! Eight seats in the 12th row, two seats in the 11th row, and six seats in the front row center! The only better seats than ours were the six rows ahead of us given out by **Billy** before the show to big fans in the balcony. Being that close made the three-and-a-half-hour drive worth every minute! And because of wind, they did not have video screens up for the people in back to see. The show was magnificent, especially **Billy's** tribute to Woodstock - he sang *With a Little Help From My Friends*, which instantly became our theme song.

Less than three months later, I had the opportunity to see **Billy** again in his last North American *River of Dreams* concert in Fargo, North Dakota - a simple five-hour drive away! It was the day before Halloween, so he sang songs like *Monster Mash* and *Werewolves of London.*

That is where I expected my story to end - no more than a big fan having the time of his life in the summer of '94. But I must say that this is just where the story begins. In February of

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1995, I was at a stop sign just down the block from my house, getting ready to pull out onto a rural highway. It was a bad intersection because the highway curves behind a hill just to the south of this intersection, and oncoming traffic cannot be seen. I ended up pulling out in front of another vehicle, and was hit in the driver's side door by a pickup going 60 miles per hour. Both vehicles flew into the ditch - mine with the driver's side door practically crunched into the armrest in the middle of the front seat. It knocked me unconscious for four days, and put me in the hospital for four weeks with a shattered left hip, a ripped diaphragm, a collapsed lung, broken ribs, several intestinal rips, and a head injury from shattering my side window with my head. Luckily, I had my seat belt on, or else I would have been thrown out the window on the opposite side of the car!

While I was unconscious, my friends took it upon themselves to contact Maritime Music to see if **Billy** could send a T-shirt or something - anything, really. I do not remember the first two weeks I was in the hospital, but my friends sure won't let me forget. I was not myself! I would swear at the nurses constantly, and I would ask peculiar questions like, "Have you met my cousin, Elvis? Elvis Presley. Did you know that he got drafted?" The first day that I am certain I can remember clearly is the day I got a box from Maritime Music. I had been in the hospital two weeks already, and doctors were beginning to believe that the old Mike was gone. This package brought that old Mike back better than ever. In this package, I found that **Billy** had sent me an autographed picture telling me to "Keep the Faith," a get well letter, and over $400 in merchandise - including all of his albums and videotapes! I can remember everything from the next two weeks of my stay following that package! Also, since I already had all of his albums, I gave my old ones away to my friends. The local newspaper found out and interviewed me the following week. They ran a full-page article with color pictures. When I got home after four weeks, I sent this article to **Billy**. He sent it back autographed with a paragraph note written on it, and postmarked from Las Vegas, where he was performing with Elton.

Because of my accident, I had to withdraw from classes at my community college. But, in the end of May, the musical group that I was part of, called "The CC Aires," was putting on its final concert of the school year. I wanted to perform with them, but I was still on crutches. I asked my teacher, Chuck Blattner, if I could at least sing a solo. He said I could do anything I wanted, so I got some friends together to perform *With A Little Help From My Friends* - our theme from *Face to Face*. The song had taken on a literal meaning for me because of all the support I received while in the hospital. We performed it with a full rock and roll band and three backup singers. I was still on crutches, but I threw them aside once at center stage, and sang the song like **Billy** did - imitating Joe Cocker in voice and convulsive movements. All while supporting my body weight with just one leg. Both nights, I got a standing ovation. I sent a video of the performance to **Billy**, asking him to send autographed pictures for all the people who helped me perform the song.

Well, the summer went on, and I finished my AA degree through summer school. I was on crutches until the Fourth of July, and now I am fully recovered. In August, I transferred to the University of Miami. A week after I left home for school, an envelope came in the mail with eight autographed pictures with my friends' names on them. It took **Billy** just over two months to respond - but better late than never.

Now, since I have left home for school, I have discovered the Internet. I found so much information on **Billy**, that I was a little overwhelmed. That is also how I learned about

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Streetlife Serenade. In that package I got in the hospital, **Billy** also sent me the box set entitled *Voyage On the River of Dreams*, an import from Australia. This made me realize that there are many more albums and tapes out there that I do not have. On the Internet, I have been able to find and obtain many bootlegs and imports that I never knew existed, expanding my collection to a size I never knew possible.

When singer Billy Joel learned Mike Stutz of Elgin was hospitalized after a serious traffic accident, he sent autographs and merchandise to make Stutz, shown below in his hospital bed, feel a little better

Star treatment

Billy Joel big aid to recovery

Speaking Out

Now, it is approaching the one year anniversary since my tragic accident, and my friends and I have the highest respect for this man named **Billy Joel.** He is one of the few famous people who didn't let the fame go to his head and is still able to take the time to personally touch the life of one of his fans. I wanted to tell my story because of everything **Billy** has done for me, and because I want people to realize that he is just as human as any of us are. I hope he earns your respect as he has mine. If you would like to make a comment on what you have just read, or are interested in trading tapes, please Email me at mstutz@students.miami.edu. Thank you for taking the time and having the interest to read my story. I am glad now that I have taken the time to write it down and share it. As the years go on, I know there are things that I will forget. After all, every year's a souvenir that slowly fades away...

THE PRODIGAL SON RETURNS

BY SUZAN WELLS

The Tilles Center
C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University
Brookville, Long Island
Thursday, February 1, 1996
7:38-9:56 P.M.

"Typical, obnoxious Long Island cheap trick" is how **Billy Joel** affectionately characterized the actions of one young man after he removed his shirt to get **Billy's** attention. And it was that down home kind of humor and casual spirit that permeated **Billy's** *Evening of Questions & Answers and Perhaps a Few Songs* at C.W. Post's 2,200-seat Tilles Center.

The sellout crowd of mostly students packed into the auditorium on this Thursday just five nights before Marcia Clark would grace the same stage before a much older audience. It was cold and snowy, but nothing could chill the spirits of fans as a camera crew interviewed the lucky ticketholders.

David Rosenthal at C.W. Post

The large auditorium included two balconies which **Billy** would later refer to as "the Abraham Lincoln assassination area." The stage setting was spartan and simple - a nine-foot grand Steinway (no lid), a small table with a bottle of Evian water, red plastic cups, a small white clip-on fan, a guitar in a stand, and a Kurt Weil synthesizer of which **Billy** said, "I don't know how to play. I just push buttons and hope that shit happens."

Classical piano music played loudly over the speakers. The news crew interviewed fans in their seats; **Billy's** mother, Rosalind Joel (in a white hat), was escorted to her seat; **Billy's** keyboard player David Rosenthal *(below)*, clad in a leather jacket, took his seat; two print photographers played with their zoom lenses; there was a definite buzz in the air.

The introduction was simple: "Ladies and gentlemen, **Billy Joel**." He strode out instantly, wearing blue jeans, black T-shirt, black jacket and green plaid scarf. The audience stood; flashbulbs erupted. A young student handed over a big bouquet of red roses, and **BJ** launched into his Miss America impression.

He laid out the ground rules: no autographs (too time consuming), no demo tapes ("I'm not a record company so I'm not going to put out your record. I write my own music, so I don't need you to write music for me. And I'm not a critic. So even if I think it stinks, I'm not gonna tell you it stinks. And I get sued all the time, and I don't want to get sued anymore.")

After a brief introduction about how he accidentally became a rock star when he merely wanted to write, **Billy** opened up the house to questions. There were students stationed around the room with hand mikes, and **Billy** tried to be as democratic as possible when picking questioners. For those of you who have seen or heard about these events, you know the drill by now. The audience asks sometimes gushy/sometimes educated/ sometimes obscure questions, and **Billy** responds with lengthy, often convoluted-but-always-to-the-point answers - actually they're stories. He rarely gives a yes or no response. On this night, the only time he seems at a loss is when a young woman asks him out after the

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show. Otherwise, his responses typically resemble the banter you hear at his concerts. Witty, clever, incisive. He punctuates his stories with music and impressions and/or accents. He doesn't so much answer a question as act it out. Clearly there are favorite stories that he loves to tell because he often works them into the answers to different questions. These answers have kind of become "hit songs" that are real crowdpleasers. Like the oft-told tale of how he wrote his own Mozart as a child taking piano lessons. Apparently, writing new stuff was more stimulating than "memorizing the dots."

The highlights for me are the unusual song requests and the obscure questions. So on this night, I was enthralled to hear *Temptation* (a song about "having a new baby in the house," written shortly after Alexa's birth) and *She's Right On Time* (a song about "people getting back together with an element of Christmas in it," with a vocal modeled after "one of my favorite singers" - Steve Winwood.) Though he performed these songs only partially, the little I heard was more than I've ever heard live before. The most moving moment was when he played a portion of Samuel Barber's *Adagio For Strings* on the synthesizer and passionately explained its meaning to him. There was also a tantalizing interlude where he showed how *The Longest Time* originated as a classical piece and demonstrated on the synthesizer how it evolved.

Of the complete songs performed, the standouts were *In My Life*, which he called his "favorite Beatles song," and a stirring rendition of *The Downeaster 'Alexa.'* He also did lovely versions of *Summer, Highland Falls* and *Piano Man* (with the harmonica).

It's impossible to share all the highlights in this short space. But here are a few:

Q: I heard about a project with a CD-ROM that you were doing. I don't know what it is but I wanted to know if you could explain it.

BJ: Okay, yeah, I have been asked if I wanted to do a CD-ROM project that has something to do with this type of format. I'm not sure if it's gonna work because my understanding is - and I'm computer illiterate, okay, I'm completely computer illiterate. I went out and I got one of those little laptop jobs because everybody in the road crew and the band all of a sudden had a computer...one year everybody had this little Mac and they're on there playing and they're tapping away and then - (mock whines) nobody's talking to me anymore. (laughter)

Now I understand that you can drop all these things into the CD-ROM, like if somebody asks me a question, the answer will already be in the CD-ROM, they'll have illustrations, and some film footage, and all kinds of eye candy and stuff, but it won't be live, it will be preprogrammed, that's right?, is that the essence of CD-ROM?

Now I got a problem with that because that's not live, that's not spontaneous. As a matter of fact, I have a problem with what's called a live album. How can it be live if it's an album? It's like jumbo shrimp. (laughter) I'm putting out a live album. I'm confused with some of the... Like interactive. Hey, like what we're having tonight is like interactive. Hey, we're being interactive, you know. Yeah. Okay so, didn't people do that before they had TV and computers? Didn't they interact? Didn't they have intercourse? Wasn't there interaction? So, the CD-ROM thing, I understand conceptually what the technology is, I have the...I yet have to see one that I go "Oh yeah, yeah, I want to do that," you know what I mean... So to answer the question, technically I don't know if I'm going to license the CD-ROM project, I've

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got a little problem with it because until somebody who is as computer illiterate as me can really understand the purpose of it, I'm in a holding pattern.

Q: There's a lot of wonderful people here to see you tonight, and I know you said you write one part of the music before you do the other. Could you maybe write a little something for your audience this evening? (applause) One for us.

BJ: Probably not. (laughter)

Q: Just thought I'd ask.

BJ: Okay, you don't understand - I can't write in front of all these people. I gotta be alone, I'm usually in a bathrobe, you know like grungy, walking around the house kicking things. You don't want to be around me when I'm writing, trust me, I get grouchy, cranky, I'm in a lousy mood till I get... (someone claps) Somebody claps, they know? (laughter)

Another thing, to be honest, I don't write thinking about an audience, I can't second guess what it is you would like to hear, I can't write thinking about: "Hmm, what do my fans want to hear next?" And I don't even like the word "fans" 'cause it makes you like this nameless, faceless blob of fandom. I'm assuming you're all individual people, and if you like what I do, then you must have your own individual intellect. So I don't think about an audience, I can't think about an audience, if I started thinking about: "Well seven million people bought the last album, so I'll direct this next album towards those same seven million people." I don't do that, who could do that. I don't write for radio, who the hell knows what they're gonna play on the radio. I don't write for the record company, I don't write for critics. I don't write for whoever - I write for me. It's purely for my own silly enjoyment (applause). It's whatever moves me. Let me give you some insight into how I do write, okay. I'm going to play something on this synthesizer. It's not an orchestra, it's not a string section, it's not going to be exactly how it's supposed to sound. I'll give you an example...

I realized I've always been trying to write like the composers I always admired. I was driving along in my car, I was living in Huntington at the time (applause), I was driving on Route 110 which can be a pain in the ass to drive on (applause), and it was in the springtime, it was around Easter time, which is one of those holy times of the year, you know. It's raining and the sky is cloudy and really gloomy, and I'm driving in my car, and I hear this music and it goes like this. (plays) Now this is a piece of music called the *Adagio For Strings*, it's one of the saddest pieces of music ever written. It was written by a composer named Samuel Barber, it's so sad they played it the night that Franklin Delano Roosevelt died. Now I had heard this music before, but I never listened, really tuned in to it. So I'm driving and I'm sitting on 110, what else am I going to do except tune in to the radio because the bastard in front of me is going about five miles an hour. (plays more) Now they used this piece of music in the movie *The Elephant Man* and in *Platoon* because it's so sad. (sings along) And it builds and it builds and it builds...and I'm shortcutting and I'm not playing it right, and it ends on this...it doesn't end, it builds to this peak (plays climax) and as it gets to that peak, the sun shoots out of the clouds, and it stops raining, and I get to...I cross over 25A, and the traffic clears up, I had to pull over (laughter/applause), and I pull over to the side of the road and I burst out crying. And I said: (shouts) "What's happening to me?!?!?!?" (laughter) I lost control, I just lost it. What happened? And I realize, this is what I love about music. This is what I want to do. This is what I

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want to create, this is what I've always tried to create. And if you get a chance to go to a store and find this piece of music...you may not be classical music fans, but if you ever really just want to get yourself totally bummed out (laughter), 'cause sometimes it's okay, get the *Adagio For Strings*. And that's the kind of thing that I want to write, and I hope before I can't write anymore, that I create music like that. That's as close as I'm going to be able to explain it to you.

Q: It's so good to see you. Anyway out of all the music that you play and deal with - classical, jazz, blues, country, what is your passion, when you're sitting home by yourself 2 o'clock in the morning, what moves you more than anything else? (laughter) Hey, that's a good one.

BJ: It isn't always music. (laughter/applause)

Q: Well, we can talk about that later.

BJ: Sometimes music is background for other things. Although I hate to use it as wallpaper. Let's see, what do I like, what do I do when I'm by myself and I just want to get charged up. Okay I'll show you what I do. (goes to synthesizer) Sometimes I give myself a concert, and I think: "Ha, ha. People pay money for this. Ha ha, I'm getting this for free, and I'm going to play longer than I usually play. Ha ha ha ha." And there's nobody there, and my cat's walking around: "Will he stop this noise already." What do I do? I'll play like um... (plays classical) I'll play all this classical music that I only know by ear. (plays Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, sings in fake German) I don't even speak German. (sings/plays) Everybody! I just go on and on and on, and I think I'm doing this so great, and my piano teacher would be there with an automatic rifle and shoot me. But it's my version of this stuff, and little by little I start to get it. That's what I do. I actually play ersatz - my version of classical music. And I got this synthesizer and I got all these speakers that go through this big living room that I got - that I don't live in - does anybody live in their living room - it's one of those rooms nobody uses, useless room. But that's what I do, I play this kind of stuff, you know like (plays more classical) (applause). But I'm getting a kick out of it. That's what I do. And sometimes I do it with no clothes on.

Q: I'm curious what's in your CD player and what's your favorite Beatle album?

BJ: What's in my CD player? I got one of those Sony 100-CD CD players. I'm lying. I actually have two of those Sony 100 CD players. Right now it's mostly all classical music: Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart, Lizst, Brahms, Debussy, Rossini, Puccini, linguini (laughter) so it's mostly classical music. What is my favorite Beatle album? That's a good question. There's so many good albums. I love *Sgt. Pepper*, yes, I love *Sgt. Pepper*... (plays opening of *Norwegian Wood*, applause, sings) I once had a girl/Or should I say/She once had me... I think my favorite Beatle album is *Rubber Soul*.

***

I hope this gives you a taste of what's so delicious about these "master classes." We've all experienced the pleasure of a **Billy Joel** concert performance, and from the feedback I've received, his personality appeals to fans almost as much as his musical talent. These special evenings of Q&A bring us even closer to our favorite performer, and they're a joy because of the intimacy they offer as well as the unexpected and downright surprising treats that emerge. Who could have hoped for a verse and a chorus from *Temptation*? Only in my wildest dreams.

I remember going to see *The American President* and hearing someone say, "I smiled through the whole movie." Well, I smiled for over two straight hours on February 1.

MORE FAVORITES...

In the Fall '95 issue, Lori Sears submitted her list of favorite **Billy Joel** songs, and we encouraged other subscribers to do the same.

Stuart Wardlaw
Miami, Florida

The Night is Still Young
Leningrad
Temptation
Until the Night
Vienna
Miami 2017
Laura
Zanzibar

Mike Stutz
Elgin, Minnesota

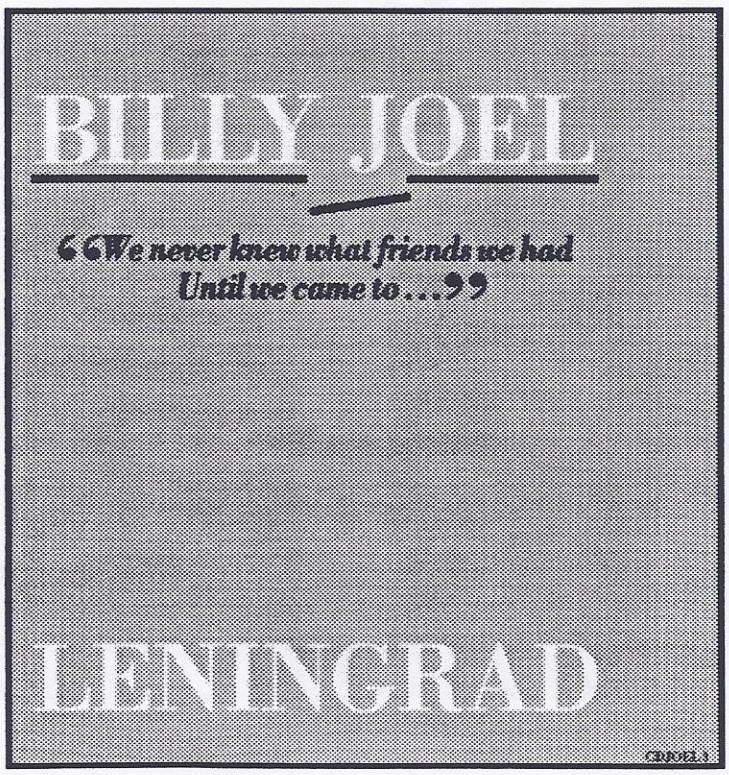
My favorite songs are the ones that are the most fun for me to play on the piano:

Scenes From an Italian Restaurant
Angry Young Man
Stiletto
Root Beer Rag
Miami 2017
Summer, Highland Falls
Souvenir

My favorite BJ song is *Souvenir*. I used it as my Senior Yearbook quote, and it has a lot of meaning to me - surprisingly for just a two minute song. I have two other favorites, but they weren't written by Billy. One is *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*, which is my favorite Elton song - and Billy performed it when I saw him. My most favorite song by any artist now is *With a Little Help From My Friends*. This song has so much meaning for me now after all I have been through.

Dan Uglow
Lafayette, Indiana

The Night is Still Young
Scenes From an Italian Restaurant
Storm Front
The River of Dreams
A Matter of Trust
New York State of Mind
Vienna
Keeping the Faith
Baby Grand
An Innocent Man
Piano Man
Captain Jack
The Downeaster "Alexa"
The Entertainer
Miami 2017
Big Man On Mulberry Street
The Great Suburban Showdown



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Joyce Ledsham
West Midlands, England

Not in any order, and they may change tomorrow:

Until the Night
The Night is Still Young
I've Loved these Days
Summer, Highland Falls
Vienna
A Matter of Trust
Honesty
I Go to Extremes
All About Soul
The River of Dreams

Benjamin L. Greenberg
Randallstown, Maryland

All About Soul - beautiful song with emotion and honesty
Lullabye - with the strings in the background, it reminds me of *Yesterday*. When my 3-year-old daughter was an infant, I used to sing this song to her at bedtime.
I've Loved These Days - wonderful lyrics about a not so perfect relationship. The live version on *Songs in the Attic* is fantastic!
Summer, Highland Falls - the intro to this song shows **BJ's** many years of classical piano. What a gem!
Piano Man - an absolute classic. Once I heard this song for the first time back in early 1974, I became a **BJ** fan for life. I also used to sing it to my daughter during her fussy periods as an infant. It always calmed her down.
Miami 2017 - a real rocker. The *Songs in the Attic* version gets my adrenaline pumped every time I hear it.

I Go to Extremes - reminds me of the excitement that my wife and I experienced when we first got engaged and started planning our wedding.
Prelude/Angry Young Man - **BJ** at his finest. A great combo of classical and rock in one song. Wow!
We Didn't Start the Fire - as a former History major in college, I really liked the way **BJ** spun together 40 years of history in a really catchy song.
Code of Silence - great duet with Cyndi Lauper. The lyrics and vocals were gutty and emotional. Bravo **BJ** and Cyndi!

FAMOUS **LAST WORDS**

QUOTES

Billy shared plenty of famous last words with Long Islanders over the winter months. Highlights from his February 1 master class appear on pages 8-11. Here are excerpts from a phone interview he gave WBAB during its annual charity marathon (December 26-30) and from *Billy Joel's Romance with the Sea*, an interview with *Newsday*.

Billy Joel's Romance With the Sea

By Bill Bleyer
Newsday, December 26, 1995

The engine is warmed up and the web of docklines is cast off. Skipper **William Martin Joel** nudges the throttle and the diesel pushes the Alexa out of its winter slip and into the lonely blue-green waters of Three Mile Harbor.

There are no microphones or stacks of speakers in the cockpit, no grand piano in the cabin of the 35-foot fiberglass cruiser. But the scraggly bearded skipper in a beat-up jacket and faded jeans looks as comfortable at the helm of the green craft with salmon and white trim as he does on a stage. **Billy Joel** isn't singing but he's in his element.

The salt sea surges through the life and music of the rock superstar who "borrowed" other people's boats for joyrides when he was a kid and whose first vessel was an inner tube. Now he voyages on a custom-made boat that, like his song *The Downeaster 'Alexa*,' was created by **Billy Joel** and named after his 9-year-old daughter.

The Downeaster 'Alexa' - his paen to the fishermen of the East End - is the most seaworthy of **Joel's** songs, but the Piano Man has written and sung about the water on every one of his 15 albums, which have sold 51 million copies. The company he formed to administer his business affairs is called Maritime Music Inc. He still lives in the sprawling home on 15 acres by the Atlantic in Amagansett that he bought with his then-wife model Christie Brinkley. And when the East End gets overwhelmed by summer day trippers, he retreats - by boat - to a waterfront getaway on Martha's Vineyard.

The salt sea is so important to the 46-year-old performer and songwriter that he says he can't compose out of sight of it. "Everywhere I've ever lived that I've written music, I've had a view of salt water - it has to be salt water. That's the real water. There are times when I'm writing and I'm at a loss, I can always sit and stare at this vast expanse and endless horizon and pull thoughts out of my subconscious because of being able to look at the water. It has some kind of primeval impact on me."

"I think I use the sea and aspects of the sea - harbors, bays, waves, beaches - as metaphors in a lot of the lyrics that I write," **Joel** says. "*Storm Front* is kind of a metaphorical song about water. *River of Dreams* is about water. There's a song called *Lullabye* in which there's a verse devoted to the similarity with rocking a baby and the rocking of a boat out on the ocean."

Billy Joel has been rocking on the ocean for as long as he can remember.

The singer is in the two-story circular library of his Amagansett home, chronicling his romance with the sea as ocean breakers keep up a drum beat on the dunes outside. The house could almost pass as a maritime museum. Two old wooden, commercial fishing boats - Gael and Melissa J. - are moored in the front lawn near a barn covered with wooden lobster floats. A large ship's helm is mounted on the oceanside

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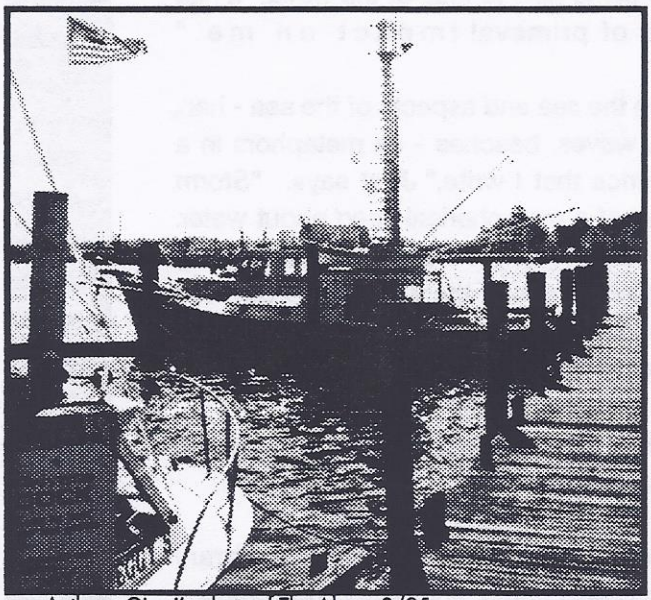
patio. Almost every room - **Joel** says he's lost count of how many there are - has some nautical accent: paintings of ships, models of ships and lighthouses, anchors flanking the fireplace. **Joel** - who plans to market a 38-foot runabout of his own design that will be built on the East End - has a room set aside for his nautical charts and boat design work. A baby grand piano and recording console sit in a corner alcove of the living room. That's where he writes his music. Across the room is another alcove with a desk overlooking the ocean. That's where he writes his lyrics.

***

Music was the key to realizing **Joel's** dream of a boat of his own. In 1972, he was living in Hampton Bays. His first album *Cold Spring Harbor* had just been released. The local star bought an 18-foot wooden whaling dory, but found it hard to row, so he added a used Evinrude engine that enabled him to fish, clam and explore the bays and harbors of the South Fork.



Anthony Giresi's photo of The Alexa, 8/95

Over the years that followed, boat sizes grew along with record sales. The vessels along the way included a 33-foot cruiser named Sea Miner he used to fish offshore and a custom-built, 38-foot sport fishing boat named Sea Major. "Then I wanted a bigger boat. It's the disease." The result was a 46-footer - "a real ego boat" with a tower and a flying bridge - he named Alexa Ray after his daughter. But his life got busier and he switched to smaller and simpler vessels like the Alexa that he could run by himself. **Joel** and Peter Needham, an owner of Coecles Harbor Marina on Shelter Island, patterned the Alexa on a swordfishing boat.

Their latest collaboration will be called the Shelter Island 38 Runabout. "I wanted a boat that would go from point A to point B quick and I didn't want to have a Cigarette boat and make a lot of noise," says **Joel**, who selected Massachusetts marine architect Doug Zurn to do the final design. "It will cruise at 40 knots." The hulls will be fabricated in Maine and the rest of the boat will be fitted out by Coecles Harbor Marina. The final price is expected to be between $200,000 and $300,000 when the first of the dozen or so boats they expect to build is ready next summer.

Joel goes boating several days a week throughout the year when he's not touring or recording. He likes to shop and explore along the New England coast. "On Alexa I can cruise at 25 knots. I can reach Martha's Vineyard in a little more than two and one half hours."

He could be Long Island's boating ambassador. "If I don't get out, I consider it a bad week. I like to take people out just to cruise the area. Gardiners Bay, the Peconics and the North Fork are some of the most beautiful areas in America. You can see so much more from a boat than you can from land."

***

Standing by the small steering wheel, **Joel** idles the Alexa past a marina where a half dozen commercial fishing boats are tied up. "That's all that's left of the commercial fleet in East Hampton," he says. "It's a shame."

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FAMOUS **LAST WORDS**

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He leaves the Three Mile Harbor entrance jetty behind and accelerates across Gardiners Bay toward Shelter Island to get an update on his boat-building project. "I'm a big believer in hometown boosterism," he says.

The Alexa, which has the classic lines of a commercial lobsterboat, is sturdily outfitted and hardly overflows with gadgets. The only indications of its owner's fame are plaques presented in appreciation by the U.S. Navy for **Joel's** performances at bases in the Philippines and another from the East Hampton Town Baymen's Association.

The Alexa looks nothing like the toy of a millionaire celebrity. It disappoints fans who expect him to be cruising on something as big as the QE2. "It always happens: I'll pull into Edgartown or some other harbor and people will say, 'Where's your mega-yacht?'"

***

As he pulls into Coecles Harbor Marina, workers are removing moorings for the winter. "That reminds me of a song called *Famous Last Words* on the last album. There's a line 'They're pulling all the moorings up and gathering at the American Legion.' I use fall as a metaphor for middle age. There's a tradition that the day after Labor Day when the summer people leave, the locals will gather on the lawn of the American Legion Hall and wave goodbye somewhat facetiously."

Joel - who says he was burned out after a two-year concert tour - joined the crowd at the Legion Hall in Amagansett for the first time this fall. Then he went right back to the sea. And to writing music - something he can't do when he's on the road.

"I always find it replenishing to get out on the water," says **William Martin Joel**.

QUOTES

In 1979, **Billy Joel** founded Charity Begins at Home, an umbrella group to raise funds for various Long Island charities. The following year, WBAB launched a radio telethon to solicit Long Island listeners to "put their money where their house is" as **Billy** put it. Each year, **Billy** participates by lending his name, his presence (in person or on the phone), and by donating rare collector's items. For the 1995 marathon, **Billy** contributed a motorcycle he picked up while touring in Dallas. On December 27, he phoned on-air hosts Bob Buchmann and Steve Taggert with the following comments:

Bob: Live on the telephone at WBAB, **Billy Joel**, Charity Begins at Home founder in the late '70s. **Billy**, thank you so much for the call you placed to me this past Friday offering our rock marathon your '77 Triumph Bonneville T140V. It has made us a lot of money so far.

BJ: Well, great. I was looking for that particular motorcycle for a long time and, I don't know, Christmas spirit just came over me.

Bob: Why don't you describe the bike because this was the year that the Triumphs put the shift on the right, the typical configuration of the shift and the brake?

BJ: Yeah, this was the first year that they actually switched the Triumph from the British setup to the American setup, that is, the shifter used to be on the opposite side of where the American shifter is and likewise with the brake, and for American riders this is problematic because you get to an intersection and you have to think. "Wait a minute, do I use this foot, do I use that foot?" If you gotta think when you've got to stop on a motorcycle, you're in big trouble.

Bob: It's the passenger who actually rides the bike in this case.

BJ: Yeah, you could use help, somebody in the back yelling, "No no, wrong foot, stupid." But you have to be able to instinctively know

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which foot to use, and I like the old Triumphs, but I always had problems because I'm used to the American motorcycles. I had problems with the British bikes, getting to an intersection and remembering which foot I'm supposed to use to use the brake and which foot to shift with.

Bob: We don't need another recurrence of the Huntington thing from better than a decade ago (**Ed. Note**: **BJ** had a motorcycle accident on April 15, 1982), so I'm just as glad that you have these post-'77 bikes these days.

BJ: That wasn't me. That was somebody ran a red light. The light was green for me on Route 110 in Huntington, and this woman decided to try to run the light. And there she was - and bang - my bike ran into her car and I flipped over her car.

Bob: Bikers always have to be careful, and it's not them that's gonna cause the screwup. It's typically the guy in the car, sometimes it's intentional, as unthinkable as that is. Most of the time it's just a visibility problem. The guy in the car is gonna make the mistake.

BJ: The problem is you don't have a lot of leeway for mistakes on a motorcycle. I don't really ride like I used to. I do what I call "old man riding" now. I go real slow and I just kinda putt along, and I look at the scenery. That particular Triumph that I found in Texas was the first year that they made the model, so it has a vintage look to it. It's a '77 and it's a Bonneville, model is T140V actually, it's a two cylinder. And the color is the classic Triumph burgundy. It's a pretty bike, and I did a little work to it to make it try to look real nice and shiny new, but I just haven't been using it all that much, and I'm one of these people, I'm not a collector, I got this thing so I would use it, and as it turns out I'm just not using it as much as I thought, so when this opportunity came along, that's why I'm giving it over to you guys.

Bob: That's great.

Joe: I know nothing about bikes, I'm going to keep quiet, Bob.

Bob: This is Joe Taggert, my co-host.

BJ: Hi, Joe.

Joe: H o w y a d o i n g , **B i l l y** ?

BJ: Good.

Bob: Now **Billy**, we've put this bike, as you've been hearing, together with every CD you've ever released, and the whole package, we've been putting it up for grabs, what we're doing right now is opening up the phones once again at 273-WBAB.

***

Bob: **Billy**, in looking at the cover of Monday's *Newsday*, this past Monday, Part 2 section, Bill Bleyer's article on your romance with the sea, that had to feel nice reading, right?

BJ: Well, I was happy just because I had another excuse to get out on the boat. I didn't know really what I was gonna do that day. Bill Bleyer and I had talked about doing a piece for awhile, he's the boating editor at *Newsday*, and I'm involved in a project where we're actually constructing a new boat that I designed, possibly to go into production with, that would be built right here on Long Island. I'm excited about the whole concept. You know Long Island was and may be becoming again a major boat-building area and I just think it's a natural thing to get into.

Bob: Well you know what, since certain things go away over time unfortunately, this is a great new thing, there's some building out there anyway, but this is a great little accelerant in the whole mix, I really hope it takes off.

BJ: Yeah, I do, too. There's been a number of inquiries from people actually all over the

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world. There was an illustration of the boat in a number of magazines, and people are calling from the Mediterranean, people are calling from Hong Kong.

Bob: They put it in *Newsday* too, right. That 36 foot runabout.

BJ: Well, you know what, it's 38 feet. I think there was a little dichotomy in the article where he kept saying 38 feet and it ended up being 36 feet. But it is a 38 foot runabout.

Bob: I know that designing boats, you always want your hand in everything you've put together. The thing you're tooling around with now, the Alexa, you had a lot to do with the designing of that, right?

BJ: Well, I essentially designed that one for my use originally to go fishing with, it was modeled after the old swordfishing boats. It was a project that I was doing on the road. I'm on the road - well not now - but I have been on the road so much of my life, many, many hours spent in a hotel room just kinda sitting there. And you either get brain damage watching television or you find something to do.

Bob: And you're not gonna write songs at that moment, no way.

BJ: Well, it's hard to write in a hotel room because what are you gonna write about - hotel furniture? It's just not a lot of stimulus in a hotel.

Joe: Chambermaids, Bill, chambermaids.

BJ: Well...exactly. So you need to keep your mind active, and even in the wintertime I'm always charting courses or designing boats. I did - the same thing I was doing in school rather than paying attention to the teacher I was doodling, you know. So it's just another way of doodling.

Joe: He doodled out a boat.

Bob: That's great. Good luck with that whole thing. Very exciting. Very exciting. We're still hearing from the Charity Begins at Home listeners from a couple of years ago that you took out on the water that day. The pictures and the memories, it was a good time for them.

BJ: Good. I had a good time.

Bob: They appreciated the tour of the East End. And I noticed in Bill Bleyer's piece, he was pointing out how you enjoy showing people the whole - you know, Shelter Island and Gardiners Bay and all that. Nice memory.

BJ: It's fun to do. I'm still amazed to this day that there are so many people who live on this island - and it is an island - who don't really know geographically what's going on. Just by driving on the expressway or Montauk Highway or 25A, you can see some things, but you really can't see what this island is till you get out and look back at it which you can do on a boat. It's an amazing place. You get a little sense of history, you kind of see what the explorers saw when they first came here, of course, they didn't see the Shoreham nuclear power plant, but you do get to see the lay of the land, and you understand why things developed the way they did. It sort of fits in a lot of pieces in the jigsaw puzzle for people who didn't see it before.

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Bob: Anyway, we're here live, **Billy**, at this beautiful hotel, the Marriott Wind Watch Hotel right on the Long Island Expressway at Exit 57.

Joe: Good view. We've got a great view. **Billy**, look out your window, we could hardly see you.

Bob: Actually this is facing toward the Northwest. We're at that Marriott Wind Watch Hotel. The view beyond the golf course, in fact, you can just about see the water, you're

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just a little shy of being able to...if you're on the top story of the hotel, you can see the Connecticut shoreline from the tenth story. But we're down...

Joe: I'm on the top floor with a small room. You got a suite, Bob, you gotta see his suite, **Billy**, it's incredible. I'm on the bottom of the totem pole.

BJ: Are you able to write music there, Bob?

Bob: This guy has seen too many suites. He wants to stay away from hotels.

BJ: My tour stopped in May of this year - '95.

Bob: It's gotta be good to be settled for a change, huh?

BJ: I was so homesick. Look, I've been on the road for 30 years, and it just...the last tour, it caught up with me. Even though I had a very successful tour, and I had a lot of fun touring with Elton - that was great - that was kind of a fun thing...you know I'm not in a band where I can break up when I get sick of the other players, you know what I mean. I'm like this one guy, I can either become schizoid, try to split up with myself, or the other way of dealing with it, is to join something which is another idea I have down the road, I'd like to...remember the old idea of supergroups? That's something I've kicked around with Henley and Sting, and it would be a fun thing to do to put together a bunch of guys just like the Traveling Wilburys.

Joe: Henley, Sting and **Joel**. I'll line up right now at Ticketron.

BJ: There's other people that might want to do it too, but I can't...I'm not at liberty to mention names but it would be a pretty good lineup.

Bob: Hey, do me a favor, file this away, make us your first phone call when you're ready to release, okay.

BJ: I'll let you know when something like this happens.

Bob: This is exciting, that's a great, great thought. I'm thinking also about perhaps another album for you this coming year or the year that follows. Are you thinking in those terms?

BJ: Well I'll tell you what I've been doing. I haven't really sat down and started writing songs per se. Like I said I worked with Elton - actually I wrote a song with Elton in a studio a few weeks ago. And that was a lot of fun working with him.

Bob: Now you were together, or was this one of those transatlantic...

BJ: No, we were both together in the studio. Actually, Bernie Taupin had written some lyrics, faxed them to me, and Elton was in New York, we got together, spent only about three hours in the studio and came up with this song. Of course, we haven't recorded it yet, but that's to be determined when. Anyway, what I'm planning to do this winter - starting in January, probably till the middle of May, is do more of these seminars that I do at universities...

Bob: The master classes.

BJ: Yeah, the master class where it's basically question and answer. And I'm doing about 30 colleges where I'll be speaking to students, hopefully, mostly students, music students, and answering a lot of questions and talking about music and writing and the music business and radio and composition and all those things. And that's going to take up a lot of my wintertime. But the kind of music that I've been writing since I've been home is not, I guess, what people would expect the typical **Billy Joel** rock and roll or popular song type of music. I'm writing classical music. I just do this, I just sit down and start to play for my own enjoyment,

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FAMOUS **LAST WORDS**

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and I'm actually writing classical music. And I'm listening to this and I'm thinking, "C'mon, what are you doing here?" But as most writers will attest, if something is coming, you've gotta go with it. And that's the kind of thing I've been writing. I don't know what I'm gonna do with it. I don't know whether it's concerto, I don't know whether it's a symphony, an opera, a ballet, I don't know. I don't even know if it's just individual sonatas, but I've been having a lot of fun writing this stuff, and it's really something that I do from time to time when I'm writing a normal **Billy Joel** album anyway. There are songs on every album that were written as classical pieces to begin with. So there's just more of that happening now for me.

Bob: Well, I can't wait to see how you decide to jell that and...

BJ: Yeah, me too.

Bob: Wow, that's exciting. I was thinking about this, you know, you could really do anything. You could do...first of all every **Billy Joel** album is different which is a real credit to you because in my mind there is no stereotypical **Billy Joel**, you're not a ballad guy or a rock guy or a pop guy, you're everything. Everything changes and progresses over the years, and I'm thinking how can it go beyond that, how can it go into even new dimensions, I mean, I could see...you did that recording of a Christmas song at the Coliseum for us eight or nine years ago. You could even release a Christmas album for crying out loud. You could do anything.

BJ: That's been suggested, but you know what, I'm not comfortable doing that. There's been so many people putting out these Christmas albums and I thought "Well...it's gonna be tough to beat Nat King Cole or Frank Sinatra." Although Mariah's doing a pretty good job of it. But she's really essentially a singer and I think of myself essentially as a writer. So there's the difference.

Joe: Billy, St. Paddy's Day double live album. Think about it. It'll sell a billion copies.

BJ: What's that?

Joe: St. Paddy's Day. Everybody's doing Christmas albums. Why don't you get a holiday that nobody uses?

BJ: Oh, St. Patrick's Day double live album.

Joe: Easter CD boxed set. I'm with you. Call me. We'll set it up.

BJ: Yeah, I think I've researched that kind of an album for many years.

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Bob: I was just wondering because I know you're a big John Lennon fan and a big Beatles fan, how did you feel about this whole Beatlemania '95 thing that came 25, 30 years later?

BJ: I have mixed feelings about it, Bob. Truthfully I can't really look at it as "the Beatles" because one of the main - the founding member is dead. So it's not really the Beatles to me, it's three members of the band. Also, I feel that the song that they rerecorded, *Free as a Bird*, was something that John discarded, and I know that I've thrown things out or I haven't recorded things because I didn't think they were up to snuff. And I'm wondering if John was alive what he really would have said about that choice of that piece of material and perhaps even the way it was recorded, and my feeling is that John might have said, "Ah, that's a piece of junk. Let's not even bother with it."

And also, the way the thing was marketed, I

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DON'T ASK **ME WHY**

DEAR STREETLIFE SERENADE:

It's really great to receive the newsletter, it's a real lifeline, especially for us here in England as we don't get much news on the great man, so it's good to keep in touch, as something has definitely been missing since the old *Root Beer Rag* finished. So keep up the great work, and I look forward to receiving the next few issues.
Jon Askew
Bedford, England

[On February 16, subscribers Glenn and Cheryl Stout of Melrose Park, Illinois, were married. Glenn sent in this poem which was performed at the ceremony. Congratulations!]

On this, our wedding day, we are lighting the Unity Candle, to signify that we have become one, bringing our two separate lives, together into a single entity, our love for each other.

We both started out, years ago, and years apart, wandering through our lives, like two streams winding through a mountain range.
As our relationship developed, and our love strengthened, we started down the mountain of our lives, coming together like two streams when they form a river.
Like a river, we were flowing strongly at some points, and weak at others, but we always kept our hopes and Dreams, about our relationship flowing.
Now, the River of our relationship has reached the ocean of marriage. Coming to its graceful resting place, but more powerful than it ever was.
Billy Joel said in his song, *The River of Dreams*, We all end in the ocean, We all start in the streams, We're all carried along, By the River of Dreams.
Cheryl, the inscription in your wedding ring reads: "My River of Dreams came true." I'm glad we are in our ocean together, the water is just fine.

CLASSIFIED

AVAILABLE: EVERY BILLY JOEL article, concert/record review, AND advertisement EVER published in Rolling Stone magazine. Mags or clippings available. For list/info, send SASE to: Howard Fields, 25 South First St., Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621, USA, Tel/Fax 201-387-8781.

ENGLISH FAN in her 30s would like pen pals. If any fans, male or female, of any age (particularly from New York, though happy to receive letters from fans anywhere) would like to be pen pals, please write to Liz Plowright at Flat 17, Merewood Court, 60 Carew Road, EASTBOURNE, East Sussex, BN21 2JR, ENGLAND. All letters answered.

UK BILLY JOEL FAN would like pen pals. I'm in my 40s but don't mind what age, or sex you are. "16-106" anywhere, please write. Would specially like to write to fans of BJ's who live on Long Island, NY. I will answer everyone, so please pick up a pen! Mrs. Joyce Ledsham, 2A Watling Street, Brownhills, Walsall, West Midlands, WS8 7PU, ENGLAND.

LOOKING FOR ANY ARTICLE about BJ and Elton John's tour through the States (videos are welcomed, too). Annegret Huxhold, Unterfarmbacher Str. 270, 90766 Furth, GERMANY.

SEEKING RARE BJ RELEASES: Australian boxed set *A Voyage On the River of Dreams* (Columbia 478091 2) and CD single *A Hard Day's Night (live)/Piano Man (live)* (Columbia 660975 2). Shawn Kyhl, 940 27th Street, Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360.

FAMOUS **LAST WORDS**

(continued from page 20)

don't know, maybe I'm naive, when the Beatles first came, of course there was a lot of hype, of course there was a lot of hoopla, but it wasn't as sophisticated a marketing campaign as it is now. The Beatles exploded onto everybody's consciousness collectively without them - the music business or the television industry - really knowing what the hell they had. Now that they know they have all these sophisticated techniques and marketing, I smell the hype, I smell the marketing a little bit too much. So I have mixed feelings about it, but on the other hand, if a lot of younger people who weren't familiar with the Beatles' material were exposed to the Beatles and really see what a great band they were, that's all for the good. So, like I said, there's two edges to it, for me anyway. But I can't in all honesty say that I think this is the Beatles that I knew. What was your take on that, Bob?

Bob: You know what, Yoko Ono endorsed it, and I've been so conditioned to hate Yoko, but we did an art gallery thing with her about four or five years ago with John's stuff, and she came off so nice and so unlike Yoko was supposed to be, she seemed very sincere and very into the whole John thing, and very nice. And in a sense because Yoko's endorsing this thing that the other three guys did, and I think they really did a good job with it and they were in a little way sentimental the way they did the backward masking of John's voice at the end saying, what was that...

Joe: Turned out nice again.

Bob: It might not have been great music but at least it was a great sentiment.

BJ: Yeah, I think the sentiment was okay, but for me, if John was alive he would have been having an argument with McCartney, I know he would have.

Bob: No question.

Joe: It got me into them. I wasn't really a Beatles fan. I'm a lot younger.

Bob: Yeah, yeah, there you go. But you don't know how John might have mellowed a little bit too in his old age.

BJ: I don't think so.

Bob: (laughs) You don't think so.

BJ: I think he would have gotten crankier. I know I have.

Bob: Well I'll tell you what, **Billy**. We are going to play you something that perhaps you haven't heard right here on WBAB. And before we start it out, I wanted to just take one more opportunity to thank you for the bike and to make sure that everyone who's listening right now tries to blow Nynex up by rushing to 273-WBAB for your 1977 Triumph Bonneville T140V motorcycle and every compact disc ever recorded by **Billy Joel**. And now, as promised, let's all listen together, this is *Real Love*, the Beatles on WBAB.

QUOTES

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