



BILL MCGARVEY

July 2006

Upon the release of his first solo album, *Tell Your Mother*, a little more than two years ago, Bill McGarvey earned rave reviews from magazines and newspapers across the country.

- **PERFORMING SONGWRITER MAGAZINE** chose *Tell Your Mother* as a DIY Spotlight Pick, declaring "Bill McGarvey has crafted 13 tracks of pure pop pleasure...The exuberance emanating from this record is perfectly executed and irresistible...From the Jayhawks-tinged opening tune "Stay" through the breathless "Settle Down (Ballad of the Cornfed Beauty)" to the heartbroken pop of the closing song "I Hear Voices" (and the following hidden track) this is first-class songwriter's pop on par with Freedy Johnston and Matthew Sweet."
- **CHICAGO TRIBUNE** "Bill McGarvey, former lead singer of Valentine Smith, cut this record in his apartment in Hoboken, N.J. But make no mistake: This isn't the work of an amateur. McGarvey is a superb songwriter. The album is filled with pop gems that manage to sound familiar and new. A song like "That's What You Get" may bring to mind the Jayhawks, but it has a flavor all its own."
- **TIME OUT NEW YORK** "McGarvey's album, *Tell Your Mother*, is a charming collection of smart pop songs."
- **PHILADELPHIA WEEKLY** (Editor's Pick) "If there really are a million stories in the naked city, Hoboken-based/Philly ex-pat Bill McGarvey sounds like he's seen a bunch firsthand...Girls who couldn't be bothered, girls who couldn't stay and girls who wouldn't go away get top billing in the pop mini suites on his *Tell Your Mother* album, which is a classy, well-arranged bouquet of winks and nods...to composers like Harry Nilsson, Ben Folds and, yep, even those McCartney and Wilson fellas...McGarvey uses jaunty chamber pop to examine dilemmas rarely addressed in the three-minute pop song...Proceed if you have a love of literate pop music."
- *Tell Your Mother* was the Mississippi **Sun-Herald's number one critical pick for 2003**, beating out releases from Sheryl Crow, Lucinda Williams and Ryan Adams.
- *Tell Your Mother* was named one of the **Best Albums of 2003** by **Fish Records** in the UK.
- The album's title track was featured on the **WB Network** show *Black Sash*.

With his custom-made set of Cocktail Drums (played while standing up), McGarvey eschewed the traditional singer-with-an-acoustic-guitar cliché and created a category all his own: the singer/songwriter/drummer. *Tell Your Mother* was a powerful blend of influences from the past and present - as if a 60's AM radio is broadcasting a soundtrack for the new millennium.

In April 2006, McGarvey finished mixing a new collection of songs, tentatively entitled *Beautiful Mess*, and--capitalizing on the success of his earlier cd--is currently shopping the new material. The new disc reveals just how far McGarvey has come as a songwriter and singer since his last release. McGarvey maintains the melodicism on *Girl Meets God* but the overall tone musically and lyrically is far more intimate than his debut. Songs like "Girl Meets God" and "Citizen's Band" reveal debts to artists like Elvis Costello and fellow Upper Darby native Todd Rundgren while "Gone, Gone, Gone" has the flavor of a 1960s technicolor film score and "Please Don't Go"--with its portraits of the desperate lives being lived in the fictional town of New Jerusalem--is the closest thing to suburban Gospel music you'll ever hear.

This diverse group of songs finds its unity in McGarvey's unique ability to combine his wry sensibility with the scrupulously observed lives of characters who are caught between yearning hope and yawning doubt.

On the new collection, McGarvey augmented his own cocktail drums, guitars, mandolin and harmonica with his backing band *The Good Thieves* which includes Jason Loughlin (Ben Arnold Band) on guitar, piano and bass; Mike Tichy (*The Mooney Suzuki*) on guitar, bass, keyboards; Stephen Hund on drums and backing vocals and Kimberly Nordling Curtin (Valentine Smith) on violin and flute.

He also enlisted Tony Leone (drums, mandolin) and Byron Isaacs (bass) from the band *Ollabelle* (Verve Records)--whom he often shared the bill with while touring to promote *Tell Your Mother*--to play on several tracks. Amy Helm, also of *Ollabelle* and daughter of the legendary Levon Helm (*The Band*) sings a beautiful duet with McGarvey on "True Blue." Rounding out *Beautiful Mess'* guest list is Andy Burton (Ian Hunter) on piano and organ and Jon Graboff (Ryan Adams and the Cardinals) on pedal steel.

BIO:

Born and raised in Philadelphia, McGarvey, calls Hoboken, NJ home now. Since moving to the New York City area he has played and recorded with several bands, including *Winter Hours*, *The Vipers*, and *The Liquor Giants*. It is for his work as lead singer of Valentine Smith that he is probably best known thus far: the band released three albums, toured extensively (sharing stages with the likes of *The Wallflowers*, *NRBQ*, *Shane MacGowan*, *The Lemonheads*, and *Joan Osborne*), and garnered critical kudos from the likes of the *New York Times*, *CMJ*, and the *New Yorker*, among many others. The *Washington Post* called them "purveyors of one of the year's most addictive pieces of jangle candy," while *Billboard* dubbed their performances "magical."

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