

Bill Jolly 50 Fun Facts: (And some things you may not have known.)

1. Questlove (from The Roots) and Bill met while playing together to back up Questlove's father's Do-wop group named, Lee Andrews and The Hearts. Questlove and Black Thought cut their original demo ideas in Bill's basement studio before the Roots were formed.
2. Bill doesn't smoke, drink or do drugs. (Never has.)
3. Bill's 1st instrument was the bongos, then the drums, which he took up in the 1st grade.
4. Bill has been booed off stage 3 times; Once in Jr. High, once in H.S., once in college. "They were all very humbling, but very necessary experiences."
5. Bill was one of the 15 founding members selected to The National Recording Arts and Sciences Philadelphia Branch Board of Governors. (NARAS votes on the Grammy Awards winners).
6. Bill was a dish washer, a day camp counselor, and a Keebler Cookie salesman before doing music full time.
7. Bill has performed music before for (5) U.S. Presidents; Ronald Reagan, George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama.
8. Bill was the "fat kid" in class and was very unpopular during his Elementary School years. He did however, play Santa Claus in the Christmas plays for 6 straight years.
9. While attending Overbrook H.S., Bill was a member of the National Honor Society, was School President and delivered the Commencement graduation speech. He was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame in 2004. Other illustrious alums are Wilt Chamberlain and Will Smith.

10. Although he doesn't like it, Bill is really good under pressure. He once got 3 hours of sleep a night for 2 1/2 weeks in order to complete 52 last second orchestral arrangements for the PBS Special, "Love Train: The Sound of Philadelphia." He also completed (5) complete albums in one week and once had to write 30 complete songs from scratch in a week.
11. Bill flunked only 1 class during his lifetime. That class was Piano 101 during his college years at West Chester University.
12. Bill never passed the audition for his college's jazz band pianist slot during his (4) years at West Chester University.
13. Bill has been featured twice in Keyboard Magazine.
14. Bill was the Commencement speaker for West Chester's 2013 graduation class and there is a statue on West Chester University's campus of Fredrick Douglass that has Bill's name etched in stone on it.
15. Bill's most memorable music moment was when he played "In a Sentimental Mood" with the late Grover Washington, Jr. at Carnegie Hall in N.Y. "I remember thinking in the middle of the duet, as I began to take my spotlight solo, WOW, I can't believe I'm actually playing a grand piano at Carnegie Hall!" Bill and Grover also played that tune during ceremonies for Julius Erving and Kareem Abdul Jabbar's retirement at the Spectrum in Philadelphia.
16. Bill beat out over 80,000 entries to win 365 nights and 1 million air miles as Hyatt's global winner of "The Big Welcome" promotion.
17. Bill played on his 1st record while in Jr. High School. The record was Gloria Neal and her Ladies of Song's, "A Totally Committed Life." Bill played the drums and still has that 45 with his name on it.

18. Before the infamous Mike Tyson rape case, Mike was asked to do a promo spot while dancing around contestant Desiree Washington. (This was the only shot of the 2 of them together.)

The music they danced to was written by Bill, who was the musical director for the Miss Black America Pageant at that time.

19. While in H.S., Bill met and spent the day with Michael Jackson and his father, Joe playing piano and going over new songs.

20. Bill's 1st picture in the paper was published in Akron, Ohio at the age of 9. Bill was on vacation at his grandmother's house and coerced the local marching band into letting him bang the cymbals. He later (ironically) played the cymbals in his college marching band.

21. Bill's 1st solo was in Jr. High School, playing the song "Shaft" on the drums. 20 years later, Bill sang and performed "Shaft" on keyboards in front of Isaac Hayes during a tribute by the International Association of African American Music, for which Bill was Musical Director. Isaac hugged Bill and said, "This was the 1st time I've heard my music without my having to play it...and I enjoyed it!"

22. Bill's 1st acting gig was playing the Jewish lead character "Tevya" in "Fiddler on The Roof."

23. Bill became a music reporter for an Emmy Award Winning TV show called "Timeout." He was known as the "Piano Man."

24. Bill's 1st article was published in the 6th grade by the Philadelphia Inquirer. He wrote a humorous poem about controversial baseball player named Dick Allen that his 6th grade teacher sent in to the newspaper, who, in turn, printed it on the front page of the sports section.

25. Bill learned to sing when the lead singer in his band quit before a big audition and learned piano when his piano player quit.

26. Bill filled in vocally for Stevie Wonder's verse during the rehearsals for "We Are the World" for Bill Clinton's Inauguration

at the Capital in Washington, DC.

27. Bill's 1st award was a trophy he received in the 6th grade as the school's best basketball player. He later received Gompers Elementary's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2003.

28. Bill's mother loved country music and Bill grew up watching the "He Haw" TV show. Bill produces and plays on many country music recordings today.

29. Bill's pet peeves: Lateness, not following through, name droppers and negative people.

30. Bill can play and reproduce any song that he can "hear" in his head instantly.

31. Bill was on the Dean's List during half of his college semesters.

32. Bill plays the piano, vibes, drums and bass guitar fluently. He would sub for which ever instrument was missing during his H.S. jazz band rehearsals.

33. Bill's musical idols are Stevie Wonder, Quincy Jones, Maurice White (of E,W&F), Joe Sample, George Benson and Paul McCartney.

34. Bill played in (and was the only African American) in a rock band during college.

35. Bill taught himself how to play songs on the piano by listening to (2) seconds of a song at a time, mastering that (2) seconds, then moving on to the next sections until he could play the entire song.

36. Bill has completed (2) Bucket Lists. One wish was to see all 7 Wonders of the World. The other was to conquer his (3) biggest fears in life which were sharks, scuba diving and jumping from an airplane.

37. Bill's late mother, Rowena, was an excellent artist and

taught Bill to draw at an early age. Bill's art was entered into many art showcases as a child. His mom was also his accountant and taught him that too.

38. Bill played his 1st professional gig with his dad's gospel group, "The Pearly Gates of Chester, PA." As a former director of OIC and The Philadelphia Housing Authority, Bill's dad also taught him his business acumen and ability to manage people.

39. Bill is actually a very quiet and private person but also a very outgoing and public person.

40. Bill was picked to play percussion with the Philadelphia Orchestra while in H.S. and in his later years, was commissioned to write a musical arrangement that the Philly Pops Orchestra performed.

41. Bill wrote "Neighbors in the New World" which the Convention and Visitors Bureau calls "Philadelphia's Theme Song."

42. Bill was a former Elementary School, Jr. High School and High School music teacher.

43. "Behind The Scarf," Bill's 1st CD, was recorded from start to finish in a week and a half.

44. If he weren't a musician, Bill would have become a professional baseball player. Bill was also a Little League baseball coach.

45. Bill's 1st TV theme song was 6ABC's "AM Philadelphia." He redid the theme (20) times before they finally accepted it.

46. Bill was once approached by a candy company about having a piece of candy named after him.

47. Bill wakes up at 4:30am every day in a good mood and is very rarely grumpy, unhappy or mean to anyone.

48. Bill's 1st performance onstage was in kindergarten, dancing to Chubby Checker's, "The Twist." Ironically, Bill was the musical director for Chubby's performance of "The Twist" during his induction into the RnB Hall of Fame in 2007.

49. Bill was slated to become the musical director for a late night Hollywood TV show hosted by basketball player John Salley. The show got bumped before airing by Magic Johnson's, "Magic Hour."

50. Bill always wanted to be a lawyer but dislikes reading. He negotiates many of his friend's contracts.