



Welcome to link4ads.com

Billy Bragg Still Wants To Help Save The Youth Of America

Tuesday April 11, 2006 @ 06:00 PM

By: [ChartAttack.com Staff](#)

For an artist who's had a career spanning more than 25 years and been called a spokesperson for his generation, **Billy Bragg** hasn't spent that much time in the studio. But Yep Roc Records has collected his first four studio albums and a wealth of bonus material on the seven-CD, two-DVD set, Volume 1. The albums, with bonus discs, are also available separately.

Bragg first emerged on the scene with 1983's *Life's A Riot With Spy Vs. Spy* debut. Armed with just a cheap electric guitar and a strong British accent, Bragg picked up the torch from American troubadours **Woody Guthrie**, **Bob Dylan** and **Phil Ochs** in writing songs that alternated between those with definite socio-political messages and others conveying sensitive portrayals of love and relationships. While never becoming a superstar, he's been recognized around the world as a vital songwriter and a valuable activist for a variety of worthwhile causes.



Billy E

The 48-year-old is still infused with the same punk attitude he developed in the late '70s that led him to the obscure band **Riff Raff** and become politically motivated by **The Clash** at their Rock Against Racism concert in his native London, England. So while he was in North America to promote Volume 1 and a series of concerts, including one in Toronto, he took time to record two new songs that can be downloaded from his [website](#). "Bush War Blues" decries the policies of the American leader, while "The Lonesome Of Rachel Corrie" pays tribute to a young American woman who was killed in Gaza while trying to help Palestinians.

"We go through times when the industry becomes all about dance music or all about electronica, where lyrics aren't important," says Bragg. "But I'm glad that we've come back to a period when they are."

But Bragg says that modern technology has taken some of the focus off of rock stars being looked up to by chosen ones to spread the word about perceived injustices in the world since the folk movement of the 1960s and the punk explosion of the late '70s. "If you've got a choice between writing a song, where you have to play an instrument, get up on stage and get an audience, and writing a blog, you're in there."

"When you have strong opinions, and nobody else in your family or in your school or your neighbourhood shares them, you need to be able to quickly find people who share those opinions. I found those people who marched with The Clash to Victoria Park. Suddenly I realized that there were 100,000 people who felt the same way. I felt justified that I could go out and talk about it and complain about it. This is my generation and this is what I'm going to do. Now that's where the bloggers are. They're finding each other and making connections."

While Bragg will continue to make music with a message on a new album that should be out in early 2006 following the release of the Volume 2 box set later this year, as well as the publication of his first book, he also embraces the internet as a means of communications for others — and as a promotional tool for art.

"When I first heard Dylan in 1972, all I had was an album. I didn't know shit about Dylan. I had to wait

reading a biography in 1976 to find out that he was inspired by Woody. It then took me six years to find a Woody Guthrie record.

"Now if you read that your favourite artist name-checks Billy Bragg, all you have to do is Google 'Billy Bragg'. There's my website, there's my bio, hear my music, buy my music. You don't have to go to the big city or come to America before I could buy a Woody Guthrie record. That's the sort of difference that we can make, and I think that's good. I think that people can get inspired more quickly."

Bragg wasn't included in the marquee Live 8 show in London's Hyde Park last July — which featured performances by the likes of **U2**, **Pink Floyd**, **Coldplay**, **Madonna**, **Robbie Williams** and **The Who** played in Edinburgh, Scotland on behalf of Make Poverty History when world leaders gathered for the G8 Summit at the same time. "I was where the politics were, which is where I thought that I should be," Bragg.

"But I don't have anything against those in the park. It should always be encouraged for people to use their fame to make a difference. It's an unwieldy thing to make a difference with pop fame, and not every day you have the time or the focus to do it. So I went where I was needed and they went where they were needed."

Wherever Bragg is, his sentiments will always be needed.

—**Steve McLean**

This story can be accessed online at <http://www.chartattack.com/damn/2006/04/1111.cfm>

[DAMN Music News](#) | [MINE Industry News](#) | [Reviews](#) | [Top 50 Charts](#) | [Features](#)
[Photo Gallery](#) | [Links](#) | [Reviews](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [Feedback](#)
[This Month's Magazine](#) | [About Chart Magazine](#)

© 1995-2001, Chart Communications Inc.

This site is a [Humungous Production](#)