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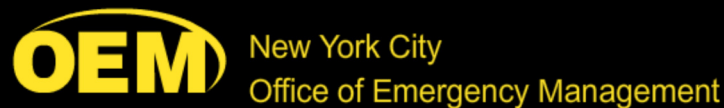
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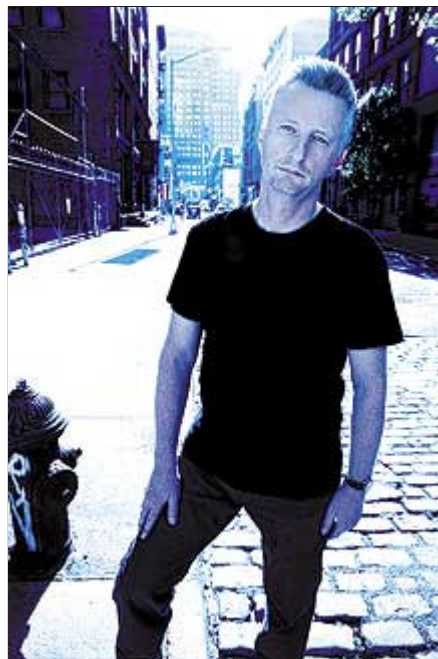
**entertainment****Still waiting for great leap forward****Billy Bragg on our political climate and delivering 'Human Kindness'**

by nolan gawron / metro new york

OCT 22, 2008

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Interview. Blending folk and punk rock while dedicating his life's work to the social consciousness that both genres were built upon, Billy Bragg's three-decade discography is comprised of songs of love and political protest. Constantly touring the world, speaking out against social injustices, he has earned himself a reputation for being one of the most prolific and politically outspoken songwriters of our generation. Following up a three-disc greatest hits collection, the "Milkman of Human Kindness," Bragg is touring to support his brand new album, "Mr. Love and Justice." Though he hails from the United Kingdom, Bragg no doubt has the upcoming U.S. election on his mind.



Of course Billy had more to say than these concise little answers. To read the full interview, visit www.metrobostonnews.com. (Photo:)

I assume you've been watching the U.S. debates. What are your thoughts on our current politics?

It's exciting, because whether you like him or loathe him, Obama has energized the whole debate. His entire campaign has engaged a lot of people whether they're going to vote for him or against him. That's got to be good for democracy.

You have always been politically outspoken. Do you get American audiences who dismiss your opinions because you're British?

Of course. That's why I never appear on a platform for a political party. I'm careful not to step over the line.

What are you most actively educating people about now?

The last couple of years, I've been trying to confront people with the idea

that our biggest enemy in making a better world is not capitalism or conservatism, but cynicism. Cynicism challenges everyone, myself included.

We all have those moments where we feel you can't get a word in. My job is to get those people together and invigorate them and inspire them. Coming together singing songs isn't going to change the world. It's what we do after we've sung the songs. Cynicism corrodes the soul. I'm talking about those people who have given up. My biggest challenge is encouraging those people to participate.

In the past you've said you wouldn't use the word political to describe your music. How would you describe it?

Some of it is political, but some of it is about love. And I'd like to think the most interesting songs are where the two overlap. I'd say the political songs are in the minority. That's the way life is. Life isn't all politics. There's got to be room for reflection and feelings as well as argument and analysis.

Sometimes the two overlap. Love can be pretty political at times as well.

Billy Bragg

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"Coming together singing songs isn't going to change the world. It's what we do after we've sung the songs."

Bragg

