



### **Bill Medley Biography**

Bill Medley is a seminal figure in the history of American music. He is perhaps best known as half of the unmistakable duo, The Righteous Brothers. Their raw emotional rhythm and blues sound essentially created the genre “blue-eyed soul.” In the mid-1960s, the Righteous Brothers became a fixture on Top Forty radio with hits like “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin,” “Just Once in My Life,” “Unchained Melody,” and “(You’re My) Soul and Inspiration,” creating an ultra- dramatic take on Sixties pop romance.

Born in Los Angeles and raised in Orange County’s Santa Ana, Medley always had a passion for music. His father led a big band and played saxophone and his mother played piano and sang. Naturally, Medley gravitated to glee club and amateur singing contests during his youth, but it wasn’t until he heard the music of Ray Charles and Little Richard that the idea of making music for a living seemed feasible.

“When I heard Little Richard,” he reflects, “I knew I *wanted* to do that. When I heard Ray Charles, I knew I *needed* to do that.”

Medley formed a local group called The Paramours, and was introduced to Hatfield, who led The Variations. But one night they put their voices together, and the result was magic.

“We just started singin’ these rhythm & blues duets and it was just absolutely instant,” Medley recalls. “Never had to rehearse it. He knew ‘em, I knew ‘em—I’ll sing this note, you sing on top,’ and that was it. The instant we sang together, it was like one voice.”

Combining Medley’s unmistakable baritone with Bobby Hatfield’s forceful tenor and the density of Phil Spector’s “wall of sound” production, the duo defied traditional music labels with air play on both pop and R&B radio stations. Their dramatic exchanges from different registers scaled unparallel heights for a pop single. “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’” ran for close to four minutes, which was unheard of for a pop single at the time. After a string of hits, The Righteous Brothers parted ways from Phil Spector and went to try their hand at producing themselves at Verve Records. The first single for their new label was “(You’re My) Soul and Inspiration,” which Medley masterly produced. The song topped the charts for three weeks- one week longer than “You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’”.

Their partnership lasted four decades, though Medley explored his solo options apart from the duo on occasion. He went on his own in the late-‘60s for six years. In 1974 the duo reunited and resumed their hit-making ways with the prophetic “Rock and Roll Heaven.” In the seventies, their live shows continued to attract fans and gained the respect of a new generation of listeners. In 1987, Medley scored a monumental hit with another duettist, Jennifer Warnes, on “(I’ve Had) The Time of My Life,” for the film



*Dirty Dancing*. The song earned an Oscar, a Golden Globe, Video of The Year, and a Grammy, and the soundtrack became one of the most successful since *Saturday Night Fever*, selling 14 million copies and once again put Medley at the top of the Billboard charts. In 1990, the Righteous Brothers' classic version of "Unchained Melody," appeared in the hit film *Ghost* and ran all the way up the Billboard charts, which introduced yet another new generation to the works of The Righteous Brothers.

On March 10, 2003, The Righteous Brothers were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The induction came just months before Bobby Hatfield's unexpected death. Medley not only lost his singing partner...he had lost a close friend whom he'd known since his late-teens. After a period of mourning, Medley made the decision to continue touring as a solo artist.

Now this year, for the first time since Hatfield's passing, Bill Medley has gone back into the studio to record an album that not only honors the legacy of their historic partnership, but also reveals the artistry of Medley in his own right. *Damn Near Righteous* pays tribute to a number of legendary mentors and peers- including Hatfield. The album is comprised of both new material and covers of some unforgettable classics, paying homage to Ray Charles with his own rendition of "Lonely Avenue," and collaborating with Brian Wilson (The Beach Boys) and Phil Everly (The Everly Brothers) on a soulful version of Wilson's classic, "In My Room." This song brings together three of the most important vocal harmonists in rock and roll. David Wild of *Rolling Stone Magazine*, said of Medley's new album, "This gritty singer has delivered his finest solo album and the best thing he's done since the Sixties, period."

Medley shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon, keeping to a rigorous tour schedule so he may share his love of music night after night with all of his loyal fans.