

BIG BILL MORGANFIELD

www.bigbillmorganfield.com

"My guitar is my torch, my soul carries the flame. Make no mistake, I'm a true bluesman."

Biography

William "Big Bill" Morganfield, born June 19, 1956 in Chicago, Illinois, is an American blues singer and guitarist. Morganfield was raised by his grandmother, Verdell Clark, in Southern Florida. He came to music later in life, having first worked as a teacher after earning bachelor's degrees in English from Tuskegee University and Communications from Auburn University.

William Morganfield is the son of McKinley Morganfield (Muddy Waters) and has emerged in the past few years as one of the top young blues talents in America. Bill has played all over the world in the past 11 years, bringing pure joy to those who have had the pleasure of seeing his live performance.

The blues world mourned the passing of Muddy, but no one missed Muddy more than his family. Muddy leaves not only a gaping hole on the blues scene but also a grief-stricken son who is contemplating how to handle the loss. Bill buys himself a guitar and retreats into a private world, intending to teach himself how to play and then pay homage to his famous father. Indeed, this was the beginning of Big Bill Morganfield as a Bluesman and the start of his blues journey. That tribute was six long years in coming, years that Morganfield spent teaching himself how to play the instrument. He studies the blues styles of the past. Says Bill, "I learned the old traditional blues, songs written in the 1930's to the 1950's."

The years of dedication and hard work paid off handsomely. Morganfield's debut album, "Rising Son", was released in 1999 to popular and critical acclaim. Guitar Player magazine expressed their belief that Morganfield's album would have brought a smile to his father's face. The following year, the W.C. Handy Awards dubbed Waters' son the Best New Blues Artist.

Morganfield recorded "Rising Son" in Chicago, the site of many of Waters' recording sessions. Bob Margolin, Waters' guitarist, served as producer and also appeared on the album. Featured were several of Waters' band mates, including: drummer Willie "Big Eyes" Smith, piano player Pinetop Perkins, and harmonica player Paul Oscher. Also in attendance were bassist Robert Stroger, an ex-member of Sunnyland Slim's band.

Bill returned to Chicago in 2001 to make his sophomore recording, "Ramblin' Mind," produced by Dick Shurman. "Ramblin' Mind" featured an appearance by Taj Mahal. Taj also contributed his original composition, Strong Man Holler, to the album.

Chicago Tribune remarked, "it's eerie, as if his father and Howlin' Wolf had never left." Billboard called "Ramblin' Mind", "a vital step toward the blues credibility he seeks...Morganfield shows that his blues have their own depth." Added Blues Revue, "Ramblin' Mind" goes a long way toward earning McKinley Morganfield's son loads of respect." Entertainment Weekly said, "Chicago blues is a powerful force in the right hands, which, in this case, belong to the son of Muddy Waters. The comparisons are inevitable, but the big man is up to the challenge."

2003, Big Bill continued his blues journey with "Blues in the Blood", produced by Jimmy Vivino and Brian Bisesi. "Blues in the Blood" fulfills the promise of greatness displayed in his debut recording. It not only features Bill's distinctive, window-rattling voice and scintillating slide guitar, but also showcases him as a songwriter, with all the songs having been penned by Morganfield except for one. Co-producer Bisesi said, "I was so impressed by how much Bill's song writing skills have improved. It was obvious that he's deep into these songs." The disk held the number one spot on Living Blues Radio Charts for three straight months. Actually, all of Big Bill's albums have reached the number one position on Living Blues Radio Charts.

In July 2009, Big Bill released his fifth solo CD. CD co-producer (and Muddy Waters' Band alumnus) Bob Margolin writes, "Big Bill Morganfield's "Born Lover", reveals and celebrates his journey and progress as a Blues artist. I find that Bill still honors his father with deep Chicago Blues. He also tells his own stories with original songs, a wide variety of style, and fiery slide guitar. Bill's singing has taken an exciting leap forward in both power and nuance. It's a thrill to hear Bill fulfill."

Big Bill's story is simply a great success story. Many have dreams, but so few have what it takes to make that dream a reality. He came from poverty and the odds were not in his favor. But hard work, burning desire, perseverance, and strong religious convictions gave him the strength and focus needed to fulfill his dreams.