

## Few Thoughts about my friend Bill

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give me whatever I wanted because he didn't want to interfere.

Though I didn't know Bill for more than the past 20 years or so, what I have known of him has always been class and integrity. What's interesting is that music brought us together, but it wasn't needed to keep us together as friends. We found much in common, like the simple gestures of writing a letter. We talked about the afterlife and possibilities, of religions, of art, you name it. He had a curious streak and an ingenuity about him that I admired and have myself, just not at his level. When he would play arrangements on the piano he was thinking of writing for the Four Freshmen, I could almost hear what was coming next, and it wasn't because of some formula, but our similar ways of thinking. I would hear this certain beautiful chord next and then Bill would play it, but with even more colors.

I loved that Bill would always look great when we were out. He was never flashy, just simply classy. We would talk as he was getting ready and he'd come out just strutting slowly with a cuff link in a hand, pushing it through the embroidered cuff in his shirt, slowly, methodically. At his memorial service I joked about how it was always a full day affair to have lunch with Bill. Now I know what my wife goes through all the time with me because everything I do is just as slow as Bill. Bill always did everything slowly and methodically, not because of age, just because. My kind of guy.

Our friendship was an interesting one. Bill not only treated me like a friend, but also as a musical peer and yet also as a son. He would talk about my future and thoughts he had on it and how I could use my music in this way or that way. When he spoke of Sue or Geoffrey, you could see the love in his eyes. His admiration for Sue's strength and her compassionate heart, was always a bright light in our conversations. Of course, he could never use enough adjectives to describe Sue's beauty and you could see how one couldn't because of her whole person. Just a pure and beautiful soul. Bill and I also share those same feelings, him for Sue, me for my wife. It felt like a parallel, just 40 years apart. When Bill would mention Geoffrey his son, he was always so proud of Geoff's accomplishments and his work ethic. He would say how much Geoff was like his mom (intelligent, courageous, big heart), but there's definitely some Bill in Geoff as well! You'd be hard pressed to find another father prouder. The Comstocks are an amazing family and the amount of love shared between them all is immense. It has been an honor for me to be a part of their family. To spend time with Bill, Sue and Geoff over these years, there's not enough appreciation I can show to and for them. Geoffrey's kids are a beacon that

exudes exactly what the family is about. Great kids, confident, talented, hard working and above all, kind.

I want to close by mentioning, to me, one of Bill's greatest traits. Everyone knows him for music, his soft-spoken ways, and the way he always carried himself, but for me, those were all just great add-ons. One of the things I most loved about Bill was his ability to listen and communicate without a selfish need, ever. I'll explain. In most conversations, and especially in these rushed days, people will listen, but be thinking about other stuff, whether it's home life or themselves, but when Bill and I spoke, we were both just in the moment. Often times when people talk, one person might explain how their favorite pet died and the other will respond with their own pet story, thereby almost turning back to themselves. Bill never did that. If there was a tough story to tell, I could tell him and he would ask me more about it and ask the whys. He wouldn't say, "Yes, Sue has been through this terrible stuff so I understand." While there is nothing truly wrong with it, he always wanted to stay focused on the issue at hand and never wanted to ever shine the light back on himself when someone was trying to speak vulnerabilities. The intention was truly to help the other person. He also listened intently and really thought before answering. You could see he wasn't just talking back at you, he was replying very thoughtfully. It's truly rare to have someone really listen to these details and probably why he was such a phenomenal musician. I know we all think or want to be that type of listener, but few are. My grandmother was that type of listener. For both her and Bill, I have a spot deep, deep in my heart for them for mainly for this reason. I don't know how many people have been REALLY listened to in life, but once you are, it's hard to go back to the regular listened to... This is what I'll miss most of all. I can always play his music, I can call Geoffrey and go play on Bill's old guitar or piano he'd write arrangements on or Geoff and I can reminisce about Bill sneaking the car out after the doctor AND Sue said no! I can even see his suits or cuff links, but I'll never be able to sit down one-on-one with him again. I will say that for me though, this loss is more for me than Bill, compared to where he should be, and that's free and with Sue. I'm happy that he lived a full life. I'm glad he's not suffering or frustrated with health problems clouding his mind and not letting his brilliance through. Though he loved spending time with his family and friends, I could see the frustration in his eyes when he spoke these last few years and he wasn't as happy as he would have liked to have been. So, I consider my loss small compared to his happiness and reunion with Sue. I would never wish him back here unless he could bring Sue and could be in perfect health. He was too intelligent and so very kind to me, I just smile thinking about our great talks and knowing that he's free from this little rock called earth and these little flesh things called bodies.

*Always thinking of you Bill.*

