

Brian Hilligoss

Singer ~ Songwriter ~ Speaker



Brian Hilligoss was raised in Archdale, North Carolina, attended East Carolina University School of Music, and was singing on the Grand Ole Opry, in Nashville, by the time he was twenty-one, sharing the stage with Roy Acuff, Porter Wagoner, Connie Smith, and performing stand-up comedy with his friend and mentor, Minnie Pearl.

The years he spent in Nashville, and at Opryland U.S.A., as a performer and musician, were the most valuable he will say. "I learned from so many crazy-talented folks about musicianship, performing, and how to read an audience and get in their hearts."

Brian went on to be a published songwriter and tour as a bass player and vocalist, with Louise Mandrell, Alan Jackson, and other headline artists while enjoying numerous appearances on television and in Las Vegas with the likes of Sammy Davis, Jr., Ray Stevens, George Burns, Mickey Gilley, Roy Clark, Ralph Emory, and others.

After years in Nashville, Brian left the music business and made the move to Chicago to raise his three boys and transitioned into an executive producer and writer for corporate theater and theme park shows. "Eventually, after surviving prostate cancer, divorce, and snow shoveling, I decided to take a chance on the truth. For years, I was always living something different than what my southern musical soul was screaming. I had to get back behind the microphone." Today, Brian has set out to reclaim his authenticity, as well as the road back (yes, back) to the Opry via Asheville, North Carolina.

With new music, reared acoustically, some gently laced with socially-conscious lyrics, Brian weaves stories of his disparate lives and observations into a single focus...to share his voice with the world in hopes of making a difference, whether it's at a festival, concert venue, or as a speaker in corporate theater.

Brian has written and directed others, from Fortune 100 CEOs to GAC-TV's Great American Country Show at Dollywood (Pigeon Forge, TN) in the last decade or so, and is putting that experience to new performance platforms for himself through music, inspirational speaking, writing, and workshops.

In the western North Carolina mountains, life is softer, creative, and more conscious for Hilligoss. "I could have gone back to Nashville, but Asheville seems to align with my journey best, for now. I am inspired by so many artists and others who have journeyed here to reinvent...to resurrect, to heal, and create," he says. "Sometimes, you have to go home."

Brian is also co-founder of Ending the Silence, mental health advocacy and school educational program for NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness.

<https://www.nami.org/find-support/nami-programs/nami-ending-the-silence>