



The LORDS of 52nd STREET



DOUG STEGMEYER

Growing up in an especially talented musical family, it can be tough to find your own voice. Certainly when your father is one of the most prolific musical arrangers of his time, and your mother is a contemporary singer and piano player. This was the household that a young Doug Stegmeyer grew up in. It's also one of the reasons why Doug was so successful and went on to play with many of the biggest acts of the last forty years.

Douglas Alan Stegmeyer was born on a cold December day in 1951, in Flushing New York. The son of Bill and Margaret Stegmeyer, Doug was immediately surrounded by music. His mother, Margaret, "Peg," was, and still is an accomplished piano player and singer. His dad, Bill, was a musical arranger for many of the biggest jazz acts of that time, in addition to being an accomplished clarinet, saxophone and piano player. Now having moved his family to Syosset, NY, Bill arranged music for Glenn Miller and Jackie Gleason, as well as performing with Billie Holiday and Billy Butterfield just to name a few. Doug, his brother Al and sister, Sue lived with a constant influx of new types of music. Then, one day Doug heard the Beatles...

Doug began playing bass at the age of fourteen, and played gigs with his friends in high school. As his teens progressed Doug would play as many gigs as he could, playing in bars and at weddings with his good buddy Russell Javors. He attended art school after graduating from Syosset High School, but he knew that music would be his career. After joining the band "Topper" with his best friends Russell Javors and Liberty Devitto, they quickly became one of the hottest club bands on Long Island. Around that time, on the west coast, Billy Joel was looking for a new band, with a New York sound. A friend suggested that Billy talk with Doug, and try him out. Doug flew out to California, hit it off with Billy and joined him on bass, for the "Streetlife Serenade" tour in 1974. After the tour finished, Doug suggested to Billy that he give a listen to Liberty, who was getting a reputation as a great drummer out in NY. Billy came back to NY and gave Liberty and Russell an audition and "Topper" became "The Billy Joel Band".

Doug and the guys would stay with Billy until 1988, playing on all his hit albums. Doug would be nicknamed "The Sergeant" by the band, because he was Billy's first real Musical Director, and was put in charge of the band while they were in the studio. Doug also helped audition musicians and contributed to writing some of the songs. Doug and the guys recorded "Turnstiles," "The Stranger," "52nd Street," "Glass Houses," "The Nylon Curtain," "An Innocent Man," and "The Bridge." As Joel's touring band, they also played on all of his live albums, and on the Greatest Hits recordings. In between touring and recording, Doug would perform in studio with Karen Carpenter, Phoebe Snow, Hall and Oates, Paul Simon and Debbie Gibson along with many others.

His reputation as a solid bass player with a great musical ear had spread throughout the music community. After his departure from the band in 1988, he decided to use the skills he had acquired from all his time in studio with Phil Ramone to open his own recording studio in Centerport, NY. He became known for his ability to take musicians with somewhat limited talents and fine tune them, often playing bass and producing at the same time. Doug was proud of all the people he worked with, but was especially proud of his work with Mike DelGuidice, who would go on to perform with Billy Joel as well. Producing became Doug's calling, and he was good at it.

Sadly in 1995, Doug passed away. He is survived by his mom Peg, brother Al, sister Sue and brother in-law Kevin. He has left a great legacy, with the music he left behind and the musicians he helped along the way. Doug was a proud Long Islander, spending whatever rare free time he had on the water, boating or fishing. This was his home. He loved the fact that he was able to be himself here and get away from the craziness of the road. As much as he liked being part of Long Island, Long Island was a big part of him.