



The LORDS of 52nd STREET



RICHIE CANNATA

When you first hear “New York State of Mind” by Billy Joel, a few things stick out in your mind; the fantastic songwriting and musicianship, and THAT solo. The solo that many people can remember note for note that has become part of us. When Richie wrote and performed that solo in 1976, little did he know what that song and that solo would go on to represent for the biggest city in the world. When you are hearing it, you can feel the subway rumble beneath your feet. You can feel the sadness and euphoria of the city’s inhabitants as they scurry beneath the monstrous skyscrapers. By the end of the solo, you feel as if you were transported aboard a Greyhound on the Hudson River Line. Richie wrote that solo as a New Yorker, as a Long Islander, and he and his sound is forever ingrained in us.

Richie was born in 1949 in Brooklyn, New York, the son of Ernest and Anna. At the ripe old age of four, he had an attraction to the piano, then at eight, he laid his eyes on his future musical, life long companion, the tenor sax. With incredibly supportive parents, Richie blossomed as a musician, especially after the family moved to Garden City, Long Island. He played in school bands and in bands with his friends. Wetting his lips and perfecting his trade on the local club scene, Richie began doing studio sessions with a variety of musicians. Until that fateful day in 1975, when Richie was in the studio doing some session work, and the engineer, Al Stegmeyer, recognizing his incredible sound and talent, suggested Richie call his brother Doug. Doug had recently gotten the gig as Billy Joel’s bass player, and they were looking for a sax player!

Richie quickly gelled with Billy and the guys, and joined them on the “Turnstiles,” where he would play that amazing solo. Billy knew he had something special. Richie would continue to tour and perform on albums for the next five years. Performing on multiplatinum records such as “The Stranger,” “52nd Street,” “Glass Houses,” and even writing on “The Nylon Curtain.” It was then that Richie felt it was time to start a family and expand his horizons, performing with different and varied musicians. He went on to become a member of The Beach Boys, playing on their recordings and their successful world tours. He would also go on to perform with Elton John, Celine Dion, Tommy Shaw, Phoebe Snow, Roseanne Cash, Vince Gill and many more.

Richie then took a chance in 1985, and opened up “Cove Sound Studios” in Glen Cove. By bringing his unique musical talents to help other musicians, it put Long Island on the map as a “place to be” for recording for already established musicians. Artists such as Whitney Houston, Celine Dion, Billy Joel and Jenifer Lopez would pass through “Cove Sound’s” doors. Richie would earn many Grammys and an Oscar. He was also a member of John Stamos’ band, “Jesse and The Rippers” on the TV show “Full House,” and continues to this day in his latest position as Musical Director for New York Yankee Bernie Willams and his band.

Richie has always been a true Long Islander at heart, living and working there. He is proud of his beautiful family, starting with his wife, Shirlene. Their talented son, Eren and his wife, Kristen, recently had their first child, Ceo Prince Cannata. Richie couldn’t be more proud to be a grandfather, and watch his grandson grow up on Long Island. Richie is a Long Islander in his heart and soul, and forever remains grateful for the way living on Long Island has shaped his life.