



## The Reluctant Rocker

Bill Ricchini strums and sings behind the scenes.

**D**URING HIS SENIOR YEAR AT ARCH BISHOP RYAN HIGH SCHOOL IN THE NORTHEAST, Bill Ricchini thought it was time to express himself. With no formal lessons, he learned to play guitar. "It was strictly so I could write songs," he says. But Ricchini wasn't like other rock-obsessed teens whose garage band rehearsals were the bane of the neighborhood. And unlike many who've long abandoned their dreams of groupies and double-encores, he's playing to a growing audience without any standard rock star affectations.

Sipping a beer at the Royal Tavern in Bella Vista, Ricchini lacks that look-at-me bluster of many a musician. There are no loud stories of hotel room orgies. The singer-songwriter's shyness matches the softly-spun melodies on *Tonight I Burn Brightly*, his second album heard often on WXPN. The music is sad at times, breakup songs really, stories about people passing in and out of each other's lives. "It's about ghosts," Ricchini explains.

Last November, the album's first track, "A Cold Wind Will Blow Through Your Door,"

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caught the attention of Alexandra Pat-savas, music supervisor for ABC's hit show *Grey's Anatomy*. During her tenure picking the tunes to match *The OC*, she introduced bands like the Fray to mainstream TV audiences. Always scouting for new music, Pat-savas heard Ricchini's songs at a music festival and the two kept in touch. He never expected to get the call that would land his catchiest melody in prime time.

"A Cold Wind" played during an especially romantic *Grey's* scene. (It was when Mc-Dreamy reintroduced himself to Meredith at Joe's and they kissed.) "It's funny that they picked that song. It's kind of about death," Ricchini says. He isn't a big *Grey's* fan and can barely describe the plot turn his tune underscored, but Ricchini does remember one important detail: "They played it at the end of an episode ... You get paid well for that," he says. As a bonus, he's scored more fans through post-*Grey's* iTunes downloads.

The Philadelphia native says he's enjoying the new dose of fame, but Ricchini's in no hurry to vault into the international limelight. "Right now I'm not on a record label by choice," he says. Instead of touring the country like many other singer-songwriters, Ricchini has immersed himself in the renovation of his South Philadelphia home, where he's installed a recording studio. He's also writing his third album, deejaying at the Khyber and hanging out with Philadelphia friends after three years of living in New York.

At age 33, he knows his pop songs aren't a new breed of musical genius, and he's not the next rocker-turned-global-peace-ambassador à la Bono. But according to Ricchini, music doesn't have to end world hunger. He takes his cues from the Beach Boys, the Smiths and even Tommy James and The Shondells. Says Ricchini: I'd rather listen to "I Think We're Alone Now" than some U2 song that takes itself too seriously. —Joy Manning