

## Billy Idol Bio 2022

Billy Idol was an early architect of the sound, style, and fury of punk rock. His lip-curling sneer and fist-pumping persona vaulted him into the mainstream as one of MTV's first megastars, making him one of the most recognizable faces in pop music. He has sold 40 million albums while scoring numerous platinum albums worldwide, nine top forty singles in the U.S. and 10 in the U.K. including "Dancing With Myself," "White Wedding," "Rebel Yell," "Mony Mony," "Eyes Without A Face," "Flesh For Fantasy," and "Cradle Of Love." Billy was responsible for some of punk rock's most memorable, literate, and evocative moments and created a pioneering new sound by bringing the spirit of '77 to the dance floor, going on to fashion an immediately identifiable musical blueprint that integrates club-land throb, rockabilly desperation, and rock'n'roll decadence.

Like many young people in England in the mid-1970s, William Broad had little reason to feel optimistic about his chances for employment, advancement beyond his class, or an artistically or emotionally fulfilling life. Of course, these very conditions created punk, but he didn't know that yet.

One day, William encountered some interesting looking people on a train platform near his parents' house in the South London suburb of Bromley. Soon, he and his new friends – including Susan Ballion, later to be known as Siouxsie Sioux – became the earliest fans of a new band called The Sex Pistols.

William and his mates would achieve media notoriety as members of a much-photographed group of punk pioneers known as The Bromley Contingent, following the Pistols from gig to gig as they became the focal point of a worldwide scene-change in music. Then, like many of his friends, he joined a band, becoming the guitarist for a new punk group called Chelsea and then soon after, the lead vocalist in a new group called Generation X.

In late 1976, as cultural history was being rewritten nightly in the streets of London, William Broad was reborn as Billy Idol. With his star-catching name and head full of peroxide spikes, Idol was an instant rock star. Few knew his adopted moniker was initially *Billy Idle*, a name originally given to him by a disparaging schoolteacher; even at the birth of this superstar, there was a self-deprecating little boy peaking out from behind the Idolatry.

Generation X would bring splashes of positivity, pop, and romance to a scene that had heretofore been defined by its' negativity, musical atonality, and nihilistic attitude towards the opposite sex. From celebratory anthems like "Youth Youth Youth" and "Ready Steady Go" to intensely personal essays like "The Prime of Kenny Silvers" and "English Dream," Generation X expressed a fearless desire to use the new music as a way of expressing vulnerability and an affinity with rock history, consistently evoking the optimism of punk's new beginning while rejecting the easy pessimism of punk's apocalyptic outlook.

In 1980 Generation X split, but Idol and James chose to continue as Gen X. For years, Billy had been intrigued by the idea of integrating the spacious and mobile grooves of dance music into his sound. This spirit of invention was especially alive in "Dancing With Myself," the extraordinary track that opened side one of the sole Gen X album.

Released at the onset of the 1980s, in a few magical minutes "Dancing With Myself" brought together all the divergent tribes of the 1970s and created a compelling and original object of its time that achieved timelessness. Although "Dancing With Myself" did not break any sales records at the time of its' initial release, it created a remarkable stir in clubs throughout the world, where DJ's were beginning to redefine what dance music would sound like in the decade to come.

Following the dissolution of Gen X in 1980, Billy Idol decided to re-start his life in America. In 1981, 26 year-old Billy landed in shabby, crabby, cracked, wrecked and wonderful Manhattan. Idol heartily embraced the subway lows and skyscraper highs promised by the lyrics of Lou Reed and Patti Smith. It was a brave move for a man without a band and only very limited cult success in his new country. But "Dancing With Myself" had cleared a path for him.

Idol's keen sense of cultural trends and his charismatic ability to lead the way placed him in the ideal position to capitalize on an extraordinary new outlet for music called MTV. Idol was the right man at the right time, creating camera-ready music made credible by his punk rock back-story and take-no-prisoners attitude. Soon, he was as familiar a face on American TV screens as the cowboy heroes of his Long Island youth. With an extraordinary sidekick -- guitarist Steve Stevens, whose sparks of glam and skill made him a perfect companion in Billy's campaign to conquer America -- it all exploded into a platinum supernova of raised fists and soaring choruses.

Billy Idol began the 1980's in an apartment on Manhattan's then-grubby Upper West Side furnished with only a mattress on the floor and a black and white TV; he ended the same decade with numerous platinum albums and sold out tours worldwide. He

garnered three Grammy nominations, one MTV Video Music Award (and ten nominations), and a prestigious Brit Award. From 1982's "White Wedding" and "Hot In The City" (both of which landed in America's Top 40) to 1984's anthemic "Rebel Yell" and seductive "Eyes Without A Face" (the latter reaching # 4 in the U.S. charts), followed quickly by "Flesh for Fantasy" and "Catch My Fall," straight through to 1986's "To Be A Lover," Billy Idol racked up an extraordinary run of hits. In 1987 his recording of "Mony Mony" reached number 1 in the Billboard singles charts and he followed in 1990 with "Cradle of Love," which reached number 2.

A lot of people from every echelon of society misbehaved in the 1980s. Billy Idol was no exception; he lustily embraced the clichés that came with being an International rock star in the City That Never Slept.

In 1987, Billy Idol left New York City and moved to Los Angeles.

At the conclusion of the recording sessions for his *Charmed Life* album in February 1990, an horrific motorcycle accident nearly took Billy Idol's life (and came perilously close to taking his leg, along with costing him a major role in James Cameron's *Terminator 2*). However, the creative instincts that always kept Billy one step ahead of the cultural and technological zeitgeist continued to thrive, and his single "Cradle of Love" from *Charmed Life* reached #2 on the Billboard Hot 100 Chart.

In 1991, Idol acted in Oliver Stones' film *The Doors* (he also appeared as himself in a celebrated cameo in 1998's *The Wedding Singer*). 1993's *Cyberpunk* was far ahead of its time; its' lyrical themes and direct-to-computer-user marketing strategy anticipated Facebook and iTunes by a full decade. It should come as little surprise that Idol's far-sighted vision of a future dominated by software and social networking went over the head of most critics (and even some of Billy's long-time fans).

Idol returned to the spotlight in the fall of 2014 with two high profile releases that marked the latest chapter in the long and remarkable story of a musician, an inventor, a survivor, a father, a son, a man who returned from the brink, and a rebel whose yells made the mainstream sit up and pay attention.

Idol's *New York Times* bestselling autobiography *Dancing With Myself* is an electric, intelligent, brutally honest and entirely self-written account of Billy Idol's journey to fame, from his early days as front man of the pioneering UK punk band Generation X to a long and often decadent life lived loving sex, drugs, rock'n'roll, and motorcycles.

Also released in 2014, *Kings & Queens of the Underground* was Billy's first album of new material in nearly a decade.

Forty five years after releasing his first 45, Billy Idol still makes gliding, thumping, cinematic songs about sin, redemption and the love of rock'n'roll...and that's what you will find on *The Roadside* and *The Cage*, Billy Idol's latest two four-song EPs released in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

Both EPs will be instantly familiar to lovers of classic Billy Idol, while announcing a firm step into the future full of color, power, atmosphere, attitude, and mystery.

And on both new releases Billy Idol is joined by his friend and collaborator since 1981, guitarist and songwriter Steve Stevens. For 41 years – *41 years!* – Steve has been Billy Idol's sonic assassin and master blender of tones and textures, the thinking man's shredder and the shredding man's Picasso.

Billy Idol, together with his band featuring Steve Stevens, have consistently toured the World for the past two decades, headlining theatres and arenas and performing at major festivals all over the world.