

# Bill Frisell

*"the best recorded output of the decade."*

- DOWNBEAT

**GRAMMY Winner and three-time Nominee**

Received Prestigious **Doris Duke Performing Artists Award**,  
May 2012

Latest CD – **Big Sur**, out June 18, 2013

Bill has been honored with appointments from two major US jazz institutions: **SF JAZZ Center** named him *Inaugural Artistic Director* along with fellow Artistic Directors **Regina Carter, Jason Moran, John Santos** and **Miguel Zenón** to oversee programming and performances, and **Jazz at Lincoln Center** named him *Guest Curator* for the Roots of Americana series during its '13 - '14 season.

Collaborated with artists as diverse as **Elvis Costello, Bono, T-Bone Burnett, Paul Simon, McCoy Tyner, Ornette Coleman, Brian Eno, Ry Cooder** and many more - a testament to his virtuosity as a guitarist, bandleader and composer.

**GRAMMY winner and three-time nominee** including a 2009 nomination for Best Jazz Instrumental Album.

**Winner - 2013 DOWNBEAT Critics Poll for Best Guitarist** for the 12th time. Also ranked among the Best for **Jazz Artist of the Year** and **Jazz Album of the Year** for *Enfants Terribles*, his collaboration with **Gary Peacock, Joey Baron** and **Lee Konitz**.

**DOWNBEAT Readers Polls - 3-time Best Guitarist winner.** Also ranked among the best **Jazz Albums of the Year** for *Beautiful Dreamers* and *All We Are Saying*, and **Best Beyond Albums** for his collaboration with **Vinicius Cantuária, Lagrimas Mexicanas**.

**Guitarist of the Year 2013, 2012, 2009 and 2008** in the **Jazz Journalist Association Jazz Awards** - also nominated in **2011** and **2010**

Recent Album Projects:

- **Big Sur**, June 18, 2013
- **Enfant Terribles**, September 25, 2012
- **Floratone II**, March 6, 2012
- **All We Are Saying**, Sept 27, 2011
- **Sign of Life: Music for the 858 Quartet**, Apr 26, 2011
- **Buddy Miller's Majestic Silver Strings**, Mar 1, 2011
- **Lagrimas Mexicanas**, Jan 25, 2011

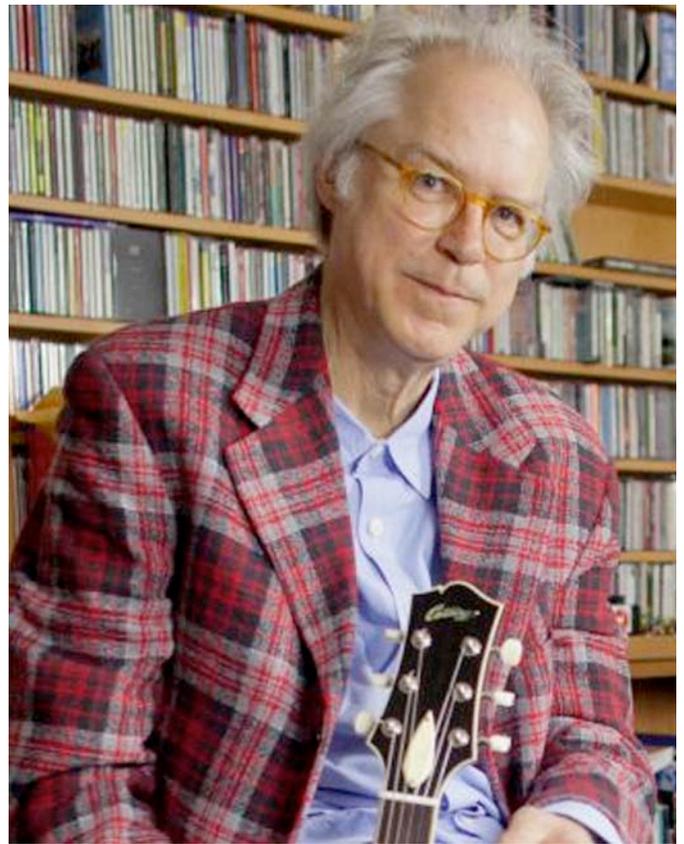


Photo by Monica Frisell

"It's hard to find a more fruitful meditation on American music than in the compositions of guitarist Bill Frisell. Mixing rock and country with jazz and blues, he's found what connects them: improvisation and a sense of play. Unlike other pastichists, who tend to duck passion, Mr. Frisell plays up the pleasure in the music and also takes on another often-avoided subject, tenderness." - *The New York Times*

"Bill Frisell plays the guitar like Miles Davis played the trumpet: in the hands of such radical thinkers, their instruments simply become different animals. And, like Davis, Frisell loves to have a lot of legroom when he improvises - the space that terrifies others quickens his blood." - *The New Yorker*

"Bill Frisell is the Clark Kent of the electric guitar. Soft-spoken and self-effacing in conversation, he apparently breathes in lungfuls of raw fire when he straps on his (guitar)...His music is not what is typically called jazz, though it turns on improvisation; it's not rock'n roll; and it sure ain't that tired dinosaur called fusion. In one of the biggest leaps of imagination since the Yardbirds and Jimi Hendrix, Frisell coaxes and slams his hovering split-toned ax into shapes of things to come...But besides being a guitar genius, he's turned into a terrific songwriter. Like Monk, Frisell's harmonic and melodic ideas form a succinct, seamless mesh with outer sonic and rhythmic ideas about his ax." - *Spin*

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# Bill Frisell

## *Big Sur*

release date: June 18, 2013

*"After decades of trodding such a brave and singular path, maybe Frisell deserves his own genre. How about 'friz'?" - JazzTimes*

*"Long one of my favorite artists, Bill never ceases to amaze me. His reach seems limitless and his grasp so deep. Big Sur is shimmering, evocative musical haiku as only Bill can do. Simply no one like him." - Bonnie Raitt*

With the release of **Big Sur** - his debut on Sony Classical's recently revived OKeh label, and first album with his **Big Sur** Quintet - guitarist-composer **Bill Frisell** makes a major contribution to the catalog of works inspired by a unique stretch of Western landscape.

The region known as **Big Sur** occupies 90 miles of spectacular central California coastline, midway between Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara, and extends inland to the abruptly rising Santa Lucia Mountains. Over the past century, poems and novels by Robinson Jeffers, Henry Miller, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Jack Kerouac, and Richard Brautigan, photographs by Edward Weston and Ansel Adams, and musical pieces by Charles Lloyd, Lou Harrison, John Adams, the Beach Boys, Fleet Foxes, Death Cab For Cutie, and others have all embodied the spirit of **Big Sur**'s rugged coastline and terrain, breathtaking vistas, and potential for communion with nature.



**Bill Frisell's Big Sur** is an hour of original music, 19 compositions that explicitly reference the coastal-mountain environment - in such titles as "A Good Spot," "Going to California," "A Beautiful View," "Big Sur," and "On the Lookout" - and evoke the remote and pastoral setting with musical blends of chamber jazz, country, classical, folk, and rock.

The project was born of a **Monterey Jazz Festival** commission in 2012 that included a residency at **Glen Deven Ranch**, an 860-acre property bequeathed to the Big Sur Land Trust by Dr. Seeley Mudd and his wife, Virginia, in 2001. Frisell - joined by violinist **Jenny Scheinman**, violist **Eyvind Kang**, cellist **Hank Roberts**, and drummer **Rudy Royston** - premiered the music at the festival in September 2012. Six months later, the quintet recorded **Big Sur** at Fantasy Studios in Berkeley, California, with longtime Frisell collaborators Lee Townsend and Adam Muñoz producing and engineering, respectively.

For Frisell - who was born in Baltimore in 1951, grew up in Denver, and was a crucial player in New York City's fervent "Downtown" scene before moving to Seattle, where he lives today - **Glen Deven's** beauty and quietude provided both inspiration and something even more rare: time to be alone with his muse.

"I had been through **Big Sur** before," Frisell recalls, "but only driving along the coast on Highway 1. I'd never turned up into those canyons. Lana Weeks, from the Big Sur Land Trust, and Tim Jackson, director of the **Monterey Jazz Festival**, took me up to the Ranch late at night up this long, narrow, winding road. It was pitch black out when they showed me around the main house and the little guesthouse, and I was tired and a little nervous. I woke up in the morning and looked out and thought, oh, my god, where am I?"

Tim Jackson had wanted the commission to go to someone who would appreciate the setting, Frisell explains, adding, "I really hit the jackpot! It was extraordinary. You're surrounded by forest, and

(continued)



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there's a trail that you can walk to the end of the bluff, where the land just drops off and you see the whole panorama of the **Big Sur** coast and the Pacific Ocean. That's what I woke up to every morning. It was incredible."

But it may have been the break from his busy schedule that made the biggest difference for Frisell. Since launching his recording career as leader in 1983 on the ECM label, the guitarist has spent much of the past 30 years in studios and on tour. His stunning résumé includes solo work, such as the recent *Silent Comedy* (Tzadik); duos with Greg Leisz, Vinicius Cantuária, Jim Hall, and Petra Haden; various trios (Ron Carter and Paul Motian; Dave Holland and Elvin Jones; Tony Scherr and Kenny Wollesen; and Beautiful Dreamers with Eyvind Kang and Rudy Royston) and quartets; and such genre-blurring projects as the Intercontinentals, The Willies, Buddy Miller's Majestic Silver Strings, Floratone (with drummer Matt Chamberlain and producers Townsend and Tucker Martine), *The Sweetest Punch: The New Songs of Elvis Costello & Burt Bacharach*, *All We Are Saying* (a tribute to the music of John Lennon), and *Richter 858* (with Kang, Scheinman, and Roberts). A recipient of the inaugural Doris Duke Artist Award in 2012, his distinctive guitar tones, colors, and harmonic sensibilities make Frisell one of the most sought-

collaborators in contemporary music. Additionally, Frisell lends his artistic vision to two major arts institutions in 2013: as a Resident Artistic Director for SFJAZZ and curator of Jazz at Lincoln Center's new "Roots of Americana" series (the latter during the 2013-2014 season).

Despite this consistently jam-packed schedule, Frisell was cut off from the outside world during his two stays at **Glen Deven**, once in April 2012, and again several months later. "The first time was for ten days," Frisell says, "and I was completely alone. And I'm not used to *that*. I had no schedule, no deadlines, and there wasn't any pressure. The idea was to just write music.

"For me, it was all about having that kind of space - not even the physical space, which was just beyond belief - but the mental space. I've been so lucky playing and working so much, but it's

become rare in the past 20 years to actually have time to reflect on things and to let them percolate or simmer. In **Big Sur**, I never knew what time it was, my phone didn't work, I slept whenever I wanted, and I woke up whenever I wanted."

When he wasn't writing in his cabin, Frisell found himself meandering out the trail toward the lookout, settling onto one of the benches with his pad of music paper, and writing down whatever melodies popped into his head. "I filled up pages and pages," he says. "The music just kept coming."

Shortly before the **Monterey Jazz Festival**, Frisell returned to **Glen Deven**, joined by his band mates. "When Jenny and Eyvind and Hank and Rudy came to rehearse, they got a feel for where I'd been when I was writing. That's really when we became the **Big Sur Quintet** - and when the music came to life."

Essentially combining the 858 Quartet with Beautiful Dreams (given Royston's participation), the new Quintet imparts exciting breadth and grandeur to Frisell's compositions. "I think of 858 as having a very wide dynamic range, from intimate and quiet to big and orchestral," Frisell says. "But the drums bring out the power even more. Rudy does unexpected things that inspire me, which is what everybody in this band is doing all the time."

You can hear Frisell propelled by his collaborators throughout **Big Sur**, notably the way his guitar grows increasingly edgy against the group's orchestral sweep and rhythmic punch on "Gather Good Things," or how it lifts and soars out of swirling ensemble updrafts on "Hawks." This is a band that can conjure a striking variety of moods and images, from nocturnal mystery ("Animals") and idyllic reverie ("We All Love Neil Young") to snaking curves of asphalt ("Highway 1") and crashing waves (the surf-rock-tinged "The Big One").

"I always feel guilty when I say I write the music," Frisell notes. "I do write these melodies on paper - and I know that's important - but there's this huge step that comes from the other musicians. For much of this album, they *are* playing the actual notes that I wrote down, but the way they bring their own sound to it, there's no way it can just be on the paper."



"This Quintet feels like family," says Frisell, who titled one new piece "Sing Together Like Family." It's evident in the way the musicians interact intuitively to shape the music while playing. "You hear that sort of thing when the Carter family sings together," he explains. "For them, it's in the blood. With us, it comes from putting in all those hours on trains and planes, and going through all this together. When it turns into music, it's about how we're connected. Whether the notes are written or improvised, all kinds of decisions are being made on the spur of the moment, which I just love. It keeps the music fresh. Hopefully, every time we play **Big Sur**, something new will happen."

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# Bill Frisell - Recent Projects

## Floratone II

March 6, 2012

Improvisation is sometimes described as spontaneous composition. But in the case of **Floratone**, the collaborative project of guitarist **Bill Frisell**, drummer **Matt Chamberlain**, and producers **Lee Townsend** and **Tucker Martine**, improvisation is the source of raw material for an extended process of assemblage, arrangement, and augmentation: Call it composition over the long haul. **Floratone II**, like its 2007 self-titled predecessor, was some two years in the making. "These are long-term, labor-intensive projects for Tucker and I," says Townsend, who has produced more than 30 projects with Frisell, as well as recordings with **Carrie Rodriguez**, **Loudon Wainwright III**, **Kelly Joe Phelps**, **Vinicius Cantuaria**, **Dino Saluzzi**, and others. "It's the type of thing that takes a while and you wouldn't want to do every year. But it's also sheer fun."

## All We Are Saying

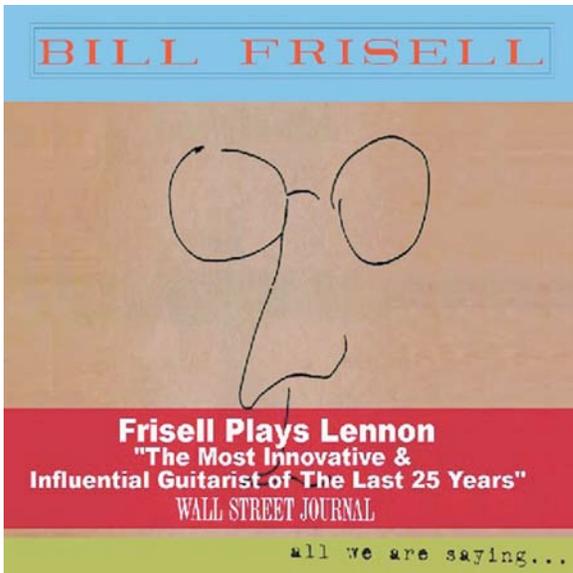
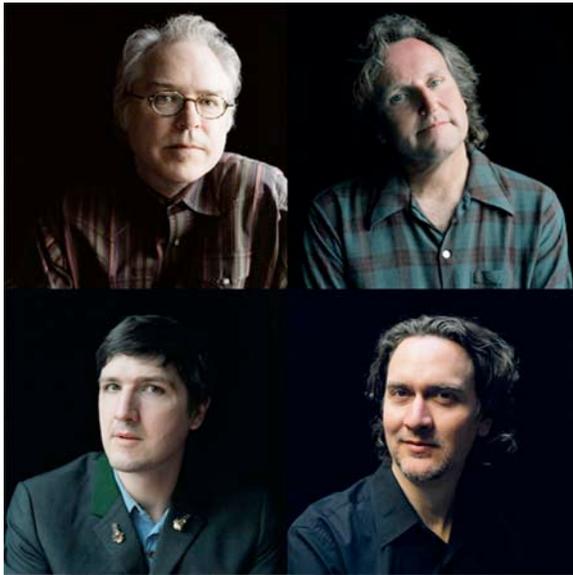
September 27, 2011

Bill Frisell explores the songs of **John Lennon** on his new album, **All We Are Saying**. Frisell has assembled a trusted ensemble consisting of **Jenny Scheinman** (violin), **Tony Scherr** (bass), **Greg Leisz** (guitars) and **Kenny Wollesen** (drums) to record his definitive take on the classic songs of John Lennon. **All We Are Saying** has long been in the works - one could say as far back as the first time Bill heard the Beatles at the age of 13. Says Frisell, "John Lennon's music has been with me, the band, everybody, the world...seems like forever. The songs are part of us. In our blood. There was nothing we really needed to do to prepare for this. We've been preparing our whole lives."

## Sign of Life: Music for the 858 Quartet

April 26, 2011

**The 858 Quartet** features **Jenny Scheinman** (violin), **Eyvind Kang** (viola), and **Hank Roberts** (cello). The ensemble was conceived when Bill was commissioned to compose music inspired by artist **Gerhard Richter's 858 series** of paintings, which were exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. It was here that the group debuted in January 2003. Bill says of the 858 string quartet, "I write the music down on paper. It is difficult to say what is composed, orchestrated, improvised, or arranged. I don't really have to tell anyone what to do. It is a musical language alive and changing all the time... growing and developing."



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## Buddy Miller's Majestic Silver Strings

March 1, 2011

Also featured are fellow guitarists **Marc Ribot** and **Greg Leisz**. Together, Bill, Buddy, Marc and Greg are the Majestic Silver Strings. Rounding out the band are **Dennis Crouch** (bass) and **Jay Bellerose** (drums). Guest vocalists on the album include **Emmylou Harris**, **Patty Griffin**, **Shawn Colvin**, **Lee Ann Womack**, **Chocolate Genius** and **Julie Miller**. Produced by Buddy, the project is his re-imagination of country songs. A bonus DVD with concert footage of the first and only performance to date with Bill, Buddy, Marc, and Greg playing the tracks selected for this project, will be included with the CD.



## Lgrimas Mexicanas

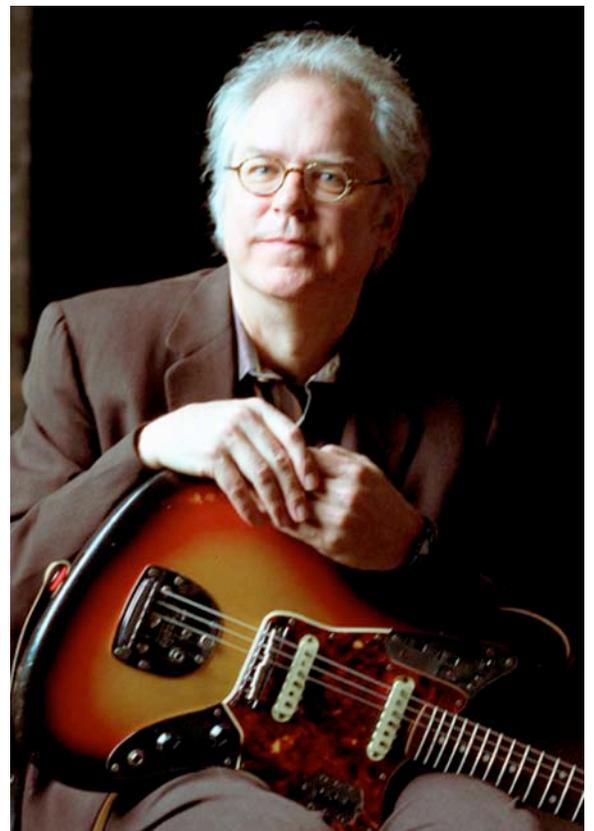
January 25, 2011

Bill Frisell and **Vinicius Cantuária's** new album, *Lgrimas Mexicanas*, epitomizes a union of extraordinary musicians. Through the blending of emotive rhythms and harmonies, and the melding of classic and experimental sounds, the two artists have found an easy home with one another. *Lgrimas Mexicanas* is scheduled for release on January 25, 2011 via Entertainment One Music. The Wall Street Journal calls Frisell "the most innovative and influential jazz guitarist of the past 25 years", while Time Out London calls Cantuária "a supremely cool Brazilian singer-songwriter/guitarist/percussionist who never wastes a note."

## About Bill Frisell

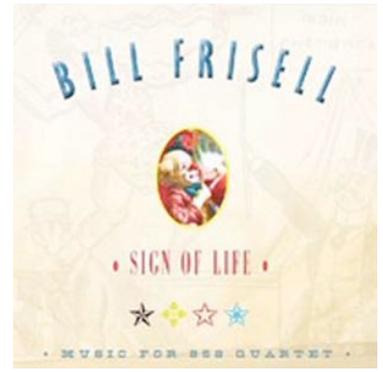
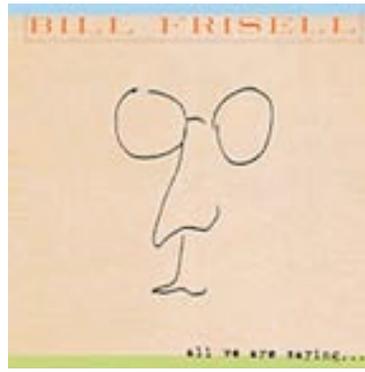
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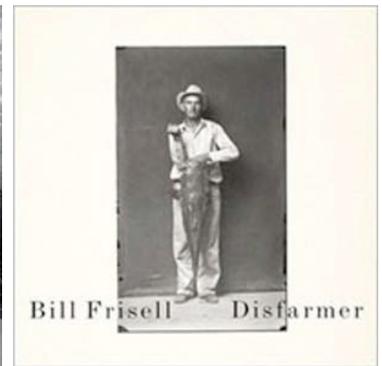
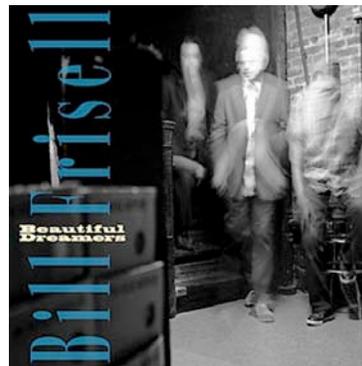
# Select Discography

Big Sur  
 Floratone II  
 All We Are Saying  
 Sign of Life: Music for the 858 Quartet  
 Buddy Miller's Majestic Silver Strings  
 Lagrimas Mexicanas  
 Beautiful Dreamers  
 Disfarmer  
 The Best of Bill Frisell Vol. 1 - Folk Songs  
 Hemispheres  
 All Hat  
 History, Mystery - **GRAMMY Nominee**  
 Floratone  
 Bill Frisell, Ron Carter, Paul Motian

Further East / Futher West  
 East / West  
 Unspeakable - **GRAMMY Winner**  
 Petra Haden and Bill Frisell  
 The Intercontinentals  
 - **GRAMMY Nominee**  
 Richter 858  
 The Willies  
 With Dave Holland & Elvin Jones  
 Blues Dream  
 Ghost Town  
 The Sweetest Punch, The New Songs  
 of Elvis Costello & Burt Bacharach  
 Good Dog, Happy Man  
 Songs We Know  
 Gone, Just Like A Train  
 Nashville  
 Quartet

Music for the Films of Buster Keaton:  
 Go West  
 Music for the Films of Buster Keaton:  
 The High Sign/One Week  
 Elvis Costello and Bill Frisell - Deep,  
 Dead and Blue  
 Bill Frisell, Kermit Driscoll, and Joey  
 Baron - Live  
 This Land  
 Have A Little Faith  
 Where In The World?  
 Is That You?  
 Before We Were Born  
 Lookout For Hope  
 Rambler  
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 In Line  
 :Rarum (Selected Recordings)

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