

Bruce Hornsby – Bio

Bruce Randall Hornsby was born November 23rd 1954 in Williamsburg, Virginia. Hornsby is the second of three sons born to Lois Saunier and Robert S. Hornsby, an oil and real estate executive. His siblings are Robert “Bobby” Jr., and John Hornsby, the latter being Bruce’s occasional co-writer. In a home that was always filled with music, it’s hardly surprising that the brothers went on to become musicians. Following high school Bruce studied music at Virginia’s University of Richmond, Boston’s Berklee College of Music and Frost School of Music at the University of Miami in Coral Gables. He graduated from the latter establishment in 1977. During 1974, at the University of Virginia, Bruce played keyboards and sang in his brother Bobby’s band, Bobby Hi-Test and the Octane Kids. Having graduated from Miami, Bruce spent some time working in Los Angeles as a session musician and songwriter before returning to Virginia.

In 1984 he formed Bruce Hornsby and the Range, and the following year they were signed by RCA Victor Records. The Range consisted of former Alpha Band alumni David Mansfield [guitar, mandolin, fiddle], George Marinelli [guitars, vocals] Joe Puerta [bass, vocals] and John Molo [drums]. Hornsby’s debut album, **“The Way It Is”** [1986], a musical marriage of rock, jazz and bluegrass, peaked at # 3 on the U.S. Pop Album Chart and has, so far, achieved triple platinum sales. The album contained three U.S. Top 20 hits, of which the title track made # 1 Pop. Hornsby and his band went on to score the 1986 Grammy for Best New Artist. The other debut album hit singles were “Mandolin Rain” [# 4 Pop] and “Every Little Kiss” [# 14 Pop]. By the time **“Scenes From The Southside”** appeared Mansfield had departed and was replaced by Peter Harris. The album peaked at # 5 on the U.S. Pop Album Chart, and included the hits “Look Out Any Window” [# 35 Pop] and “The Valley Road” [# 5 Pop]. The album also featured “Jacob’s Ladder” a Hornsby song that Huey Lewis took to U.S. Pop # 1.

A life-long Grateful Dead fan, during 1988 Hornsby began appearing in concert with the band as their guest. A few years later, and up till it’s dissolution in 1995, as keybard player and accordionist, Hornsby toured with the band on a regular basis. In 1989 Hornsby and Don Henley co-wrote the latter’s # 8 U.S. Pop hit single, “End Of The Innocence,” and the same year Bruce appeared on the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band’s **“Will The Circle Be Unbroken, Volume II”** performing his hit song “The Valley Road.” The song scored its writer the 1989 Grammy for Best Bluegrass Recording. The same year Bruce made his debut at the Telluride Bluegrass Festival.

“A Night On The Town,” which peaked at # 20 on the U.S. Pop Album Chart, featured contributions from jazz musicians Wayne Shorter and Charlie Haden, and also showcased Dead guitarist, Jerry Garcia [d. 1995]. The album featured Hornsby’s final, to date, U.S. Top 20 single - “Across The River” [# 18 Pop]. Following a 1991 three-week long tour, Bruce disbanded The Range. Bruce collaborated with trumpeter Branford Marsalis on the song “Barcelona Mona” for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, and it scored the 1993 Grammy for Best Pop Instrumental. The Dead album **“Infrared Roses”** [1991] featured “Silver Apples Of The Moon,” a song co-written by Bruce and Dead keyboard player Vince Welnick. In 1994 when the Grateful Dead were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, it was Hornsby who presented the band members with their citations.

For **“Harbor Lights”** [# 46 U.S. Pop Album] Hornsby penned jazz-oriented material and the guest session players included Pat Metheny, Branford Marsalis, Jerry Garcia and Bonnie Raitt. His exploration of jazz continued with **“Hot House”** [# 68 U.S. Pop Album], and the front cover painting imagined Bill Monroe jamming with Charlie Parker. Post 1995 Hornsby contributed to a number of Grateful Dead spin-off projects including The Only Ones, and he appeared on the live recording **“The Strange Remain”** [1999] singing “Sugaree.” The latter recording featured covers of Hornsby’s “White-Wheeled Limousine” and “Rainbow’s Cadillac.” The double CD release **“Spirit Trail”** [# 148 U.S. Pop Album] found Hornsby merging instrumentals, with rock, gospel and jazz songs.

Since the dissolution of The Range, Hornsby had toured with an evolving line-up of support players, and in 2000 he formed Bruce Hornsby & the Noise Makers, and went on to record the 2CD **“Here Come The Noisemakers”** [# 167 U.S. Pop Album]. The band was initially composed of Bruce Hornsby [piano, accordion, lead vocals], John “J. T.” Thomas [keyboards, organ, vocals], Bobby Read [saxophones, clarinet, vocals], J. V. Collier [bass], Doug Derryberry [guitar, mandolin, vocals] and Michael Baker [drums]. The experimental album

“Big Swing Face,” on which Hornsby mostly played electric keyboards, marked the end of an almost two decade long association with the RCA Victor label.

Signing with Columbia Records, **“Halcyon Days”** [# 86 U.S. Pop Album] marked a return to Hornsby's familiar acoustic, piano based sound, and the guest players included Sting, Elton John and Eric Clapton. Concurrently, RCA Victor released the compilation **“Greatest Radio Hits.” “Piano Jazz”** [2005] was one of a series of NPR CD's featuring Marian McPartland performing with a guest artist. The series has included individual discs with Bruce Hornsby, Elvis Costello and more. In 2006 Columbia Legacy Records released the, 4CD/1DVD Hornsby career retrospective **“Intersections [1985 - 2005],”** and the track “Song H” was nominated for a 2007 Grammy Best Pop Instrumental.

Hornsby's latest Columbia Records release, a self-titled eleven-song duo project with bluegrass legend Ricky Skaggs, appeared in late March 2007. Messrs. Hornsby and Skaggs were supported on the album by the latter's band Kentucky Thunder. The pair first collaborated on Skaggs' album **“Big Mon”** [2000]. Hornsby's next recording project, scheduled for a summer 2007 release, is a jazz album featuring The Bruce Hornsby Trio, which is composed of Hornsby, Christian McBride [bass] and Jack DeJohnette [drums].

Discography :

as Bruce Hornsby & The Range - **“The Way It Is”** [1986] ; **“The Way It Is Tour (1986-1987)”** Japanese only release [1987] ; **“Scenes From The Southside”** [1988] ; **“A Night On The Town”** [1990] :

Solo - **“Harbor Lights”** [1993] ; **“Hot House”** [1995] ; **“Spirit Trail”** [1998] ; **“Here Come The Noisemakers”** [2000] ; **“Big Swing Face”** [2002] ; **“Greatest Radio Hits”** [2004] ; **“Halcyon Days”** [2004] ; **“Intersections [1985 - 2005]”** 4CD/1DVD retrospective box set [2006] :

with Marian McPartland – **“Piano Jazz”** [2005]

with Ricky Skaggs - **“Ricky Skaggs & Bruce Hornsby”** [2007] :

DVD's - **“A Night On The Town”** Bruce Hornsby and guests [1990] ; **“Rockpalast Live”** Bruce Hornsby and the Range [1991] ; **“Bruce Hornsby & Friends”** [2004] ; **“Three Nights On The Town”** Bruce Hornsby and the Noise Makers [2005] :

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