

music *plus*

REVIEWS, TOUR INFO, CAREER UPDATES & MORE

★ **CATCHING UP**

Major Detour

Billy Gilman's "One Voice" went through some scary changes—but now he's back.

"Not being able to sing really got me down," says Billy, now 17. "It's what I love to do."



Billy Gilman thought he was washed up. After taking the music world by storm as a 12-year-old in 2000 with the double platinum *One Voice*, a fact of life that every teenage boy has to face threatened to derail Billy's career forever. His voice started changing—and

just kept on changing for two seemingly endless years.

"With what I heard come out of my mouth in those two years, I thought I was never gonna sing again—*ever*," says Billy, now 17, checking out the view of the woods at his family's house in Hope Valley, R.I. "My parents, management and fans kept my spirits up, but I had no hope, completely no hope.

I thought, 'That's it, that was my singing career.' I thought about what else I'd want to pursue, but I don't think there's anything else I'm good at!"

Not to worry—Billy's voice finally stopped changing early this year. And as fans have already heard on his new album, *Everything and More*, he still sounds terrific. Of course, now he must grapple with a music industry that has continued to develop in his absence.

"When *One Voice* was getting ready to come out, it was so different compared to what it is now," notes Billy. "Even five years ago, it was 'Let the music speak.' Now, what I'm seeing is that it's who you know."

Billy makes his reentry into that uncertain landscape with *Everything and More*, a more varied and mature album that should please country fans much more than his previous effort, 2003's poppy *Music Through Heartsongs*. "It's really a grown-up *One Voice*, with

a little deeper message—and a deeper voice," chuckles Billy. "The first single was 'Everything and More,' a love song. We never *thought* about putting out a love song as a single when I was 11. Who

could take that seriously? Now it just seemed right."

With his future as a singer no longer in doubt, Billy is planning to move from his

hometown of Hope Valley to Nashville in the near future. "It's where the music that I love is," he explains. "I love to be home, because my family's here and it's quiet and peaceful, but I'm kind of out of my element here. When I'm in Nashville, I just fit. It clicks."

It's time to start making life decisions like that—after all, next May Billy will hit the big 1-8. "Can you believe that?" he says. "I can't. I feel old!"

— CHRIS NEAL



Billy (with friend) in 2000, at age 12

BILLY GILMAN 2005 BY JOE HARROWICK; BILLY 2000 BY MARC MORRISON

vertis: Please, soft shadow polaroid and cd. Thanks.