

Larry Whitler Biography

I'm writing my own bio so maybe this should be called my *autobiography*.

I'll start at the beginning. I was born in New York City in 1955. My Dad was a New York City Police Officer and my Mom was a housewife. I grew up on Long Island in a suburb of New York City called North Merrick with my three brothers and my sister. I am the middle child.



I begged my parents for music lessons. Bolognese School of Music was right around the corner from our home and so I went there for several years as a young child and learned accordion and music theory from a teacher named Carl. (I never knew Carl's last name. He was a great teacher. I remember that he was Italian and that he'd often send me to get him cigarettes and coffee.)

Early adolescence brought me into a keen awareness of Top-40 radio and I suddenly found myself frequenting record stores. I found myself mostly impressed with those recording artists who wrote their own songs. I had already written a couple of pieces on my accordion but there was no question about it – I needed a guitar!

I bought a \$12 guitar at a department store and a book titled, "How To Play Guitar" and quickly began building a repertoire of chords. I'd also buy song books that were companions to my favorite albums and artists. I learned to play some of the songs I liked the best but I soon replaced the time spent learning those "cover" songs with time spent writing "original" songs.

I booked myself for a recording session at Ultra-Sonic Recording Studios in Hempstead when I was 15 years old and recorded my first record titled "Mr. Happy Man." I played the guitar, the accordion, and the piano on the record and I overdubbed two vocals. I took the bus to and from the studio carrying my two instruments and when I arrived home I had an acetate recording of my new song that I quickly showed off to my Mom and then to my friends.

I would return to Ultra-Sonic a few times to record other songs and, in the process, learned a little bit about recording.

I teamed up with Jeff Denlea about this time and the two of us played for hours mostly for the walls. We



called ourselves, "The Bologna Eaters" and then later "Whitler And Denlea." We had mastered two-part harmony by the time my family moved to Florida in February of 1972.

The move didn't end the music. I would travel to New York frequently and eventually Jeff and I found ourselves playing nightclubs, taverns, and bars all over Long Island, Queens, Brooklyn, and The Bronx. I don't think we ever played a bar in Manhattan.

In 1977 I moved in with my brother in Santa Monica, California, and I pitched my songs to anyone who would listen. I worked, mostly at a pizza joint on the beach, but I made \$35 extra every now and then doing lead sheets for a producer in Beverly Hills named Phil Gernhard.



From late 1977 until somewhere around 1985 I played coffeehouses in colleges from as far south as Miami to as far north as Connecticut. I had a few "real" jobs during those days, too, including a part time job at a radio station.

My son, Alex, was born in 1986 and I knew I wanted to be home so I gave up my "road musician" days and finally settled down. As a Dad and as a songwriter it only seemed natural that songs for children would emerge, and they did.

I teamed up with Robin MacBlane and we created the duo Robin And The Giant.



We played schools all over central Florida and released several cassette albums. Many of the songs on those cassettes have since been re-recorded, along with new

songs, and are now available as CDs all over the internet.



Today I perform both with Robin as "Robin And The Giant" and as a soloist. Alex is grown and I enjoy performing the songs I've written

for any audience that will have me. I hope you will be in one of those audiences soon.