

## ROGER MCGUINN BIO

An Evening with **ROGER MCGUINN** begins with the stage dark and the sound of Roger's 12-string Rickenbacker guitar filling the house as he approaches the standing microphone to sing his signature Bob Dylan song "My Back Pages." He always begins his concerts with this song because he takes the audience on the journey through which his love of folk music took him to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Jim McGuinn (he changed his name later to Roger) began playing guitar when he was 14 and left Chicago for his first professional job at 17. The Limelites sent him an airplane ticket to Los Angeles to play guitar and banjo on their RCA album "Tonight in Person." It was during that recording time that he joined them at the Hollywood Bowl opening up for Eartha Kitt."

Chad Mitchell heard about McGuinn's abilities and asked him to join his group, "The Chad Mitchell Trio" as the accompanist on guitar and banjo. He was 18 years old.

He toured with the CMT for a year or so but when Bobby Darin saw him performing, he immediately offered McGuinn a job paying twice what he was making with Mitchell. Mr. Darin asked Jim to play his guitar and sing a 15 minute set of folk songs in the middle of his variety concert.

When Bobby decided to take a break from performing live, he invited Jim to join him in New York city to work at the famed Brill Building as a songwriter for TM Music. It was a day job, so in the evenings Jim would work as a studio musician in the City. He became Judy Collins' musical director, helped Paul Simon record the demo for "Sound of Silence" and was very active in the recording business as the "go to" guy for 12-string guitar.

It was at the Brill Building that Jim first heard the most fascinating music come over the radio. The Beatles were using folk music chords with a rock beat. He was drawn to the idea and began singing 'rocked up' folk music in Greenwich Village coffee houses. The performances did not endear him to the folk singers of the time, but the club owner loved it. He put a sign outside advertising "Beatle Impersonations" ... which McGuinn found embarrassing. He needed to get out of New York; so he accepted a job in Los Angeles at the Troubadour folk club, opening up for Hoyt Axton.

Hoyt Axton was the first person to invite Jim to sing on a recording. He sang harmony on Hoyt's "Balladeer" album.

The folk audience didn't appreciate the combination of folk songs and a Beatle Beat anymore than the folkies in Greenwich village but there was one musician that did. His name was Gene Clark. It was the beginning of a musical revolution.

David Crosby, Chris Hillman and Michael Clarke joined the duo and history was about to be made. The Byrds were born!

Their first single was penned by Bob Dylan but when the group heard the demo, they weren't too impressed. Jim had an idea on how to fix the folkie song. He had been an arranger in NYC, so adding a Bach type intro and a Beatle Beat took the song "Mr Tambourine Man" to the number one slot across the world.

Roger (he had changed his name) disbanded the BYRDS in 1973 to pursue his dream of being a folk singer like Pete Seeger. He says that the BYRDS were a nice detour on his way to his dream.

He recorded five solo albums on Columbia Records. In 1978 he joined with Gene Clark and Chris Hillman for 3 albums on Capitol Records. In 1991 just after the BYRDS were inducted to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, he recorded on Arista Records his acclaimed "Back From Rio" album with a host of friends, including Tom Petty, Elvis Costello, David Crosby, Chris Hillman and others. It was the last vinyl record in his catalogue.

In 1995 Roger became concerned the traditional folk songs were being lost. No one was recording the songs of over one hundred years ago, so he had an idea. He had always been interested in technology and the world wide web was coming of age. He decided to post an original folk song with a live recording on his web page mcguinn.com each month. He hasn't missed a month since November 1995. It is carried by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a public service.

In 1996 he released his autobiographical one man show on Hollywood Records, "Live From Mars." The Jayhawks joined him for two studio recordings, "May The Road Rise To Meet You" and "Fireworks."

Appleseed Records invited Roger to record some of his favorite folk songs with the vanguards of folk music: Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Jean Ritchie, Josh White Jr and his guitar teacher Frank Hamilton and his wife Mary. The recording "Treasure From the Folk Den" received a Grammy nomination in 2002.

In 2005, Roger went into the studio with John Jorgensen and Stan Lynch to record a tribute to his late friend George Harrison, "If I Needed Someone." It was fitting for Roger to record it because George told him that he was inspired by Roger's guitar work on "Bells Of Rhymney." This recording became the beginning for Roger's own recording label, "April First Productions." The name was from the wedding date in 1978 to Camilla. He released another 4-CD set to commemorate the 20 year Folk Den Anniversary in 2015.

With freedom that came with his own label Roger could record anything he wanted and he did.

CCD, a recording of sea shanties was one of his favorites because of the lore of the sea. He also released a live concert recorded for his mother's 102 birthday which includes a DVD with some concert footage and friends talking about his influence including Tom Petty, Bruce Springsteen, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Chris Hillman, Dave Barry, Pete Seeger and Derek Taylor.

The fans at concerts wanted recordings of some BYRDS songs, so Roger re-recorded "Mr. Tambourine Man," "So You Want to Be a Rock and Roll Star" and "Turn, Turn, Turn." Since Roger was the lead singer and lead guitar player on those songs in the BYRDS, the songs sound like the BYRDS. He included new songs on this CD called "Sweet Memories."

During the year at home through the COVID lock down, Roger and Camilla decided to send a Christmas CD to friends as a Christmas card. The friends encouraged them to release it to the public since it is a true Christmas CD...simply titled "Merry Christmas"

When asked if he plans on retiring, he laughs, "What? Give up show-business? It's called "playing music" and I've been playing since I was 14."