

## Bonnie Dobson – Bio

Bonnie Dobson was born on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1940 in Toronto, Canada and was raised there. Her father was a trade unionist. Through her older sister, at the age of 11, Bonnie became interested in folk music. Bonnie's sister was friendly with the musicians who eventually formed the folk group, The Travellers. During the 1950's Bonnie attended summer camps in Ontario and Quebec province, where she was exposed to the music of Pete Seeger and Leon Bibb who were booked to perform concerts [at the camps]. As a result of this exposure, Dobson began playing guitar during her teens and went on to perform songs during the interval at [her] high school dances.

Following high school, Dobson enrolled as an English major at the University of Toronto, but was far from happy there and, when, in the summer of 1960 she was offered the opportunity to tour and perform in the U.S.A. she grasped the opportunity. Bonnie's debut solo concert took place at the Exodus in Denver, Colorado, and she went on to tour the States opening for Brownie McGee and Sonny Terry. Enamoured by the life of a touring musician, Bonnie decided to drop out of college and become a professional performer. Signing by the Prestige label, Bonnie recorded four albums for the label all of which were produced by Kenny Goldstein. "**Bonnie Dobson At Folk City**" was captured during three consecutive nights at the legendary New York City club Gerdes Folk City, and included the first recording of Dobson's best-known composition "Morning Dew."

During the period 1962-64 Dobson was based in Chicago, and then spent the following year living and working in New York City. Dobson's fifth solo album, "**For The Love Of Him**," was a Mercury Records release. In 1965 Bonnie moved back to Toronto, and began performing in local clubs and appearing on CBC radio and television. She appeared regularly on "1967 And All That." In the late 1960's Dobson signed with RCA Victor Records and went on to cut two albums for the label. On "**Bonnie Dobson**" she revisited "Morning Dew," while the subsequent "**Good Morning Rain**" featured three songs by the, then, relatively unknown U.K. folk songwriter Ralph McTell.

"Morning Dew," her first composition, was inspired by the Stanley Kramer directed movie "**On The Beach**" [1959] which in turn was based on English born Neville Shute's novel of the same name. Dobson recorded the song on a number of occasions, and the 2000 box set compilation "**The Best Of Broadside 1962 - 1988**" featured a 1962 version titled "Take Me For A Walk." The first cover of the song was by Fred Neil and Vince Martin on their Elektra duo album "**Tear Down The Walls**" [1964] for which the Ohio born/Florida raised Neil partially rewrote Bonnie's lyric. "Morning Dew" has also been recorded by The Grateful Dead [on their debut album], Clannad, Dave Edmunds, The Allman Brothers and also the late American bred performer Tim Rose [d. 2002], who, using the Neil/Dobson version of the lyric, then claimed and subsequently won part title to song royalties due to a loophole in U.S. copyright laws. Curiously, Rose ended up living in London and is buried in Brompton Cemetery.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1969 Dobson made her U.K. concert debut at Queen Elizabeth Hall and the following year settled in England, where she went on to record "**Bonnie Dobson**" for Argo Records and "**Morning Dew**" for the Polydor Record label. For a few years Bonnie continued touring and performing, and she also made a number of appearances on television. Dobson eventually retired from the music business, returned to college, completed a degree, and eventually attained the position of head administrator of the Philosophy Department at Birkbeck College, University of London. Dobson's RCA Victor albums have been reissued on CD by the UK imprint, Rev-ola Records. "**Bonnie Dobson**" appeared during late 2006 and "**Good Morning Rain**" during late February 2007. The Argo album "**Bonnie Dobson**" was reissued on CD by the U.K. based Vocalion label during late 2006.

Discography : "**She's Like A Swallow And Other Folk Songs**" [1960] ; "**Dear Companion**" [1960] ; "**Bonnie Dobson At Folk City**" [1962] ; "**A Merry-Go-Round Of Children's Songs**" [1962] ; "**For The Love Of Him**" [1964] ; "**Bonnie Dobson**" [1969] ; "**Good Morning Rain**" [1970] ; "**Bonnie Dobson**" [1972] ; "**Morning Dew**" [1976] :

**Arthur Wood**

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