

## The Halifax Three – Bio

The Halifax Three cut two albums for Epic Records during 1963, and the line-up consisted of Dennis “Denny” Doherty [born November 29<sup>th</sup> 1941], Patrick LaCroix and Richard Byrne. They met, and first sang together, at a 1960 New Year’s Party in Halifax, Nova Scotia. A couple of months later they began performing as The Colonials. Doherty had been born and raised in Halifax, and had begun singing at the age of sixteen, later joining a local rock’n’roll band, The Hepsters. Apart from a two year stint as a professional golfer, Pat LaCroix, who hailed from Victoria, British Columbia, had been involved in music most of his life. He had sung with his brother’s jazz group, then studied the piano, voice and arranging at Westlake College in Hollywood, before taking off on a youthful journey of discovery that took him to Europe and the UK. Back in North America he scored his own music show broadcast out of Halifax, and also performed in Montreal nightclubs. Richard Byrne, who was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, wrote songs and arranged all the material that the Trio performed. Prior to joining Denny and Pat, he first sang on radio at the age of ten, and had also been an artist, radio announcer and animal trainer. As The Colonials they performed on a local television show Travellin’ On Home, making sixteen weekly episodes. By the summer of 1961 they were performing regularly in Montreal clubs and then moved on to Toronto the following year. Spotted performing in a Niagara Falls club, by impresario Harry Altman, they subsequently auditioned in New York on May 1<sup>st</sup> 1962 for the International Talent Agency and the CBS subsidiary, Epic Records. Scoring two contracts, the band were renamed The Halifax Three. The trio’s self-titled debut album was released in early 1963. Considering Doherty’s post-Halifax Three career path, it’s somewhat intriguing to note that the album opened with John Phillips’ “Bull Train.” The collection included three Byrne originals and a further handful of traditional songs that he arranged. Seven months later the Trio released their sophomore album **“The San Francisco Bay Blues.”** Once more, Byrne was the only band member to supply original and adapted material. The band added a fourth member, Eric Hord, who played banjo. Hord later became a support player for Mamas And Papas, and his replacement was Canadian, Zalman Yanovsky. As fall set in The Halifax Three went on the road with a package tour, Hootenanny USA. One of the other featured acts was The Journeymen, the line-up of which included John Phillips and Scott MacKenzie. After the tour, The Halifax Three headed to the west-coast but met with little success and broke up in early 1964. LaCroix returned to Canada and became a successful, Toronto based, photographer. These days, the Paul LaCroix Trio plays jazz in local night-clubs. Doherty then became a member of the Mugwumps with Zal, Cass Elliot and James Hendricks before becoming Papa Denny of the Mamas And Papas.

Discography : **“The Halifax Three”** [1963] ; **“The San Francisco Bay Blues”** [1963] ; **“The Complete Halifax Three”** [2002] :

**Arthur Wood**

Kerrville Kronikles 09/02

[490 words]