

## John Flynn – Bio

John Flynn was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1957 and raised in the city suburb of Ridley Park. Like Chuck Brodsky, Flynn is a Phillies fan. Aged twelve he picked up the guitar, because, according to John it was *"the only way I could make eye contact with the opposite sex."* One of John's uncles, an ex-marine, and a Kingston Trio fan, taught the youngster the chords to "If I Had A Hammer" and "Michael Row The Boat Ashore." His six-string training complete, Flynn began writing songs almost straight away. John Denver was one of his early musical heroes. Following High School, John went on to study Political Science at the city's Temple University. After graduating from Temple – he funded his studies by playing in local bars - and with the long-term aim attending law school, Flynn decided to head for Nashville for the summer. By this time, his influences included Kris Kristofferson, John Prine, Phil Ochs and Jimmy Webb, as well as the works of transcendental philosophers/poets Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. He scored a writing deal with Al Cooley's Combine Music, who also published Kris Kristofferson's songs. Initially camped at Cedars of Lebanon State Park, it was there that Flynn wrote the ballad "Rainbows And Butterflies." In early 1983, the song gave Billy Swan a # 39 Country Chart Single. Far from being a typical Nashville co-writer, Flynn remains proud of a couple of songs that he penned, one with Dave Mallet and the other with Kim Richey.

Eventually Flynn returned to Philadelphia, taught driver's education during the day for a time, and played in local bars at night. To alleviate the boredom of playing an endless stream of cover songs, he would occasionally sneak his own songs into a set. Not the first journeyman musician to do that in a bar. As a writer Flynn draws on his own life experiences for inspiration, as well as turning stories that he's told or read into songs. In 1992, Flynn self-released his debut album **"From This Hard Box Of Time"** and the following year **"Haunted By The Ghost Of A Chance"** appeared. Two songs on the former recording "The Duck Song" and "Road Kill Cafe" led John to enter the field of children's music, and many of the children's songs that he went on to record were co-written with his children. **"Love Takes a Whole Box of Crayons"** [1995] won The American Library Association's Family Album of the Year. His second children's album **"A Manatee Sneezed on Me"** followed in 1999. From the mid-nineties through to last year, as well as performing in clubs and festivals, John played children's concerts and also in school assemblies, songwriting workshops and artist residencies in elementary, middle and high schools. His children's albums are now out of print and since late 2002 he stopped performing children's concerts.

Flynn made his main stage festival debut at the 1995 Philadelphia Folk Festival, and was subsequently signed by the local imprint created by Gene Shay and Carl Apter, Sliced Bread Records. **"John Flynn"** included a cover of Cheap Trick's hit, "I Want You To Want Me" alongside eleven of his originals. His first recording of the new millennium **"To The Point"** was made during two nights of SRO shows at a The Point in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. Unusually for a live recording, it mostly featured new songs, plus a reprise of "Hard Box Of Time" and a studio recording of Flynn's 911 song "I Will Not Fear."

"Old Paint" a cut from John's self-titled 1997 recording, was covered the following year by Chris Ledoux on his Capitol Records album **"One Man Road."** From the same Flynn collection, and on the Audium label, Rodney Redman covered "Back In My Baby's Arms." Redman's late 2002 album, his solo debut, was self-titled. Flynn spend part of 2002 as the artist-in-residency at the IHM R.C. School in Wilmington, Delaware. Last fall he took the role of Jesus in the school's production of **"Godspell,"** and appeared as a guitar player [typecasting!] in an episode of the CBS tv series **"HACK."** He is currently working on a musical based upon the life of Saint Francis of Assisi.

**"Dragon"** appeared in the late spring of 2003 on the Mettafour label, and was followed on the same label, in the summer of 2006, by **"Two Wolves."**

Discography : [excluding children's recordings]

**"From This Hard Box Of Time"** [1992] ; **"Haunted By The Ghost Of A Chance"** [1993] ; **"John Flynn"** [1997] ; **"To The Point"** [2001] ; **"Dragon"** [2003] ; **"Two Wolves"** [2006] :

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 07/03 & 06/06

[725 words]