

McGuinn, Hillman & Clark – Bio

This short-lived trio was composed of former members of The Byrds, Roger “Jim” McGuinn, Chris Hillman and the late Gene Clark [d. 1991]. During April/May 1977 the threesome toured Europe/U.K. with their respective bands – McGuinn with The Thunderbyrds, Hillman with The Chris Hillman Band, and Clark with his Kansas City Southern Band – that featured musician friend/producer Thomas Jefferson Kaye [d. 1994]. The Birmingham date was cancelled due to ‘customs difficulties’ [+] but the London shows went ahead, were taped and subsequently broadcast by the BBC. Two decades later Strange Fruit Records released the 2CD collection **“3 Byrds Land In London 1977,”** which featured performances by each band and closed with the former Byrds performance of the hits “So You Want To Be A Rock N’ Roll Star,” “Mr. Tambourine Man” and “Eight Miles High.”

The tour proved to be the spark that saw McGuinn and Clark go on to tour the States as an acoustic duo, with Hillman and even Crosby occasionally joining them onstage. A show at the Boarding House in San Francisco resulted in the bootleg recording **“Doin’ Alright For Old People.”** In 1978 when the duo signed to Capitol Records Hillman decided to come aboard and **“McGuinn, Hillman & Clark”** was released in January the following year. Three singles “Don’t You Write Her Off,” “Surrender To Me” and “Bye Bye, Baby” were released that year but none charted. **“City”** surfaced in January the following year by which time an infirmed Clark had departed ‘acrimoniously’ having only been partially involved in the recording sessions. The foregoing pair of albums was produced by Ron & Howard Albert [Fat Albert Productions]. Famed for their R&B recordings Jerry Wexler and Barry Beckett produced a self-titled album by Roger and Chris that was released during March 1981 but it failed to generate significant sales. The pair eventually went their separate ways.

McGuinn resumed his solo recording and touring career, while Hillman worked as a solo act for a time and then formed the bluegrass influenced Desert Rose Band with his old buddy Herb Pedersen. Clark went on to form the Firebyrds with whom he recorded and toured. He also worked and recorded as a solo act and with Carla Olson. As a result of the rift that occurred during the making of **“City,”** Clark wasn’t invited to participate in the new “Byrds” tracks specially recorded for the band’s 1990 self-titled box set. The following year, Gene passed away a few months after joining McGuinn, Hillman, Crosby and drummer Michael Clarke at the band’s Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Cleveland, Ohio.

In the early nineteen-nineties the U.K. based independent Edsel Records issued **“Return Flight 1”** and **“Return Flight 2”** that reprised the trio/duo’s three Capitol recordings. Self-explanatory in terms of content **“The Capitol Collection”** was a 2CD set released by the U.K. based label Evangeline Records in early 2008 that featured the contents of all three albums.

Note.

[+] – The Odeon Cinema in New Street was to be the venue for the appearance by the three former Byrds. Hundreds of fans, including moi, sat way past the listed start time only to be told by ‘the management’ that the groups would not be appearing. Already in London, after the tour opened with a Dublin date, the story that surfaced in the ensuing days was McGuinn & Co. couldn’t be bothered travelling the 120 miles from London. Post the London dates the tour collapsed in disarray.

Discography : **“McGuinn, Hillman & Clark”** [1979] ; **“City”** [1980] ; **“McGuinn Hillman”** [1981] ; **“Return Flight 1”** [1992] ; **“Return Flight 2”** [1993] ; **“3 Byrds Land In London 1977”** [1997] ; **“The Capitol Collection”** [2008] :

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