

## Roger McGuinn – Bio

James Joseph McGuinn III was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 13<sup>th</sup> 1942. His parents, James and Dorothy, were writers and he would accompany them on national book tours. They wrote the best seller **“Parents Can’t Win.”** Reaching his mid-teens McGuinn became aware of Elvis Presley and for his fourteenth birthday his parents bought him a guitar. One of Jim’s high school teachers was an acquaintance of folksinger Bob Gibson, who came to play for the class. McGuinn changed his allegiance from rock to folk soon afterwards. Although he’s a self-taught guitar player, McGuinn took five-string banjo lessons at the then newly opened, and now a Chicago folk music institution, Old Town Music School. One of his teacher’s was Frank Hamilton, who later joined The Weavers.

As soon as Jim graduated high school, he became a professional musician. While still attending school he had made solo appearances in Chicago folk clubs, including the original Gate Of Horn, and was even offered a job with The Limelitters. Staying in touch, following school he moved to L.A. to work with the group. He spent two months with The Limelitters and appeared on **“Tonight In Person”** [1960], following which he moved to San Francisco and worked as a solo act in the North Beach clubs. Next, Jim headed east to New York and auditioned for The Chad Mitchell Trio. He remained with the Trio for over two years, and appeared on the albums **“Mighty Day On Campus”** [1961] and **“Live At The Bitter End”** [1962]. In 1962 McGuinn left Mitchell’s group and worked for a short time in the folk music segment of Bobby Darin cabaret act. By 1963, living in Greenwich Village, Jim was working on his own again and freelanced as an arranger/session musician/songwriter and worked in the Brill Building. During this period he contributed to recordings by The Irish Ramblers, Hoyt Axton, Tom & Jerry [later Simon & Garfunkel] and Judy Collins [arranger on **“Judy Collins # 3”**]. The latter recording included Pete Seeger’s “Turn, Turn, Turn” which McGuinn would record with The Byrds.

In late 1963 was back on the west coast where he scored solo gigs at The Troubadour, met Gene Clark, and renewed his acquaintance with David Crosby. In time that trio became The Jet Set, recorded one single for Elektra as The Beefeaters, before adding Chris Hillman and Michael Clarke to their ranks and changing their name, again, to The Byrds. Between 1964 and early 1973 The Byrds saw around sixteen musicians pass through it’s ranks and in the process they officially recorded eleven albums. In 1967 Jim changed his name to Roger when he joined the Subud faith. The original Byrds reunited for a self-titled album in 1973, issued by Asylum Records, but never toured in support of the recording.

In June 1973, Roger McGuinn recorded his debut solo album, and the self-titled set was issued by Columbia. That year McGuinn worked with Bob Dylan on the soundtrack album to **“Pat Garrett & Billy The Kid.”** For **“Peace On You”** Roger formed a road band consisting of Steve Love [bass], Richard Bowden [guitar], Greg Attaway [drums] and David Lovelace [keyboards] and those players also contributed to **“Roger McGuinn & Band.”** Invited to join Dylan’s Rolling Thunder Tour, following the first leg of the epic tour, McGuinn recruited British rock guitarist Mick Ronson, David Mansfield [guitar], Rob Stoner [bass] and Howie Wyeth [drums], and with Ronson producing the sessions, McGuinn cut one of his best solo efforts **“Cardiff Rose.”** When Ronson decided not to tour the album as a sideman, McGuinn formed Thunderbyrd, with James Q. Smith [guitar], Bruce Barlow [bass] and Lance Dickerson [drums]. Those players had seen service with John Mayall and Commander Cody. In the process of recording **“Thunderbyrd”** McGuinn sacked the first band and recruited Rick Vito [guitar], Greg Thomas [drums] and Charlie Harrison [bass]. Thunderbyrd subsequently toured the UK, in a package with Gene Clark’s band Kansas City Southern and Chris Hillman’s band. The tour was not a success, and fell apart when Hillman pulled out.

In the late seventies McGuinn got together with Clark and Hillman and they cut two albums as a trio, and when Clark departed partway through completing the second album, completed another album as a duo. Through the eighties McGuinn was without a recording contract and he toured for the most part as a solo act. During this time he recorded with the Beach Boys [1986], Crowded House [1988] and with the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band on **“Will The Circle Be Unbroken, Vol. II”** [1989]. In January 1991 The Byrds were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall Of Fame, The Byrds 4CD Box Set had been released and McGuinn finally cut a solo album following a fourteen-year long silence. During those years Roger had been reluctant to work with a small independent label since he felt none had adequate distribution and marketing arrangements. Bearing the *tongue in cheek* title **“Back From Rio”** was released by Arista. Guest players on the sessions included Timothy B. Schmidt [Poco, Eagles], Tom Petty and a few of his band members, Elvis Costello and John Jorgensen [Desert Rose Band], plus Hillman and Crosby.

In the early nineties, fascinated by the possibilities offered by the Internet, McGuinn established The Folk Den [ <http://ibiblio.org/jimmy/folkden/php/search/> ] and began posting MP3 audio files of public domain songs. Some 100 songs have been archived since the project began, and the project was commemorated in 2001 by the Appleseed Recordings disc **"Treasures From The Folk Den"** and it featured, among many, guest vocals from Pete Seeger, Judy Collins, Joan Baez, Jean Ritchie and relative newcomer Eliza Carthy. Prior to that in 1996 Hollywood Records issued the *in concert* **"Live From Mars"** in which McGuinn literally reprised his life in music through songs he is associated with. Roger McGuinn's latest recording, a self-released effort appeared in the Spring of 2004 and was titled **"Limited Edition."**

Discography :

Solo only : **"Roger McGuinn"** [1973] ; **"Peace On You"** [1974] ; **"Roger McGuinn & Band"** [1975] ; **"Cardiff Rose"** [1976] ; **"Thunderbyrd"** [1977] ; **"Back From Rio"** [1991] ; **"Born To Rock 'N Roll"** compilation of Columbia albums [1992] ; **"Live From Mars"** [1996] ; **"Treasures From The Folk Den"** [2001] ; **"Limited Edition"** [2004] :

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 04/04

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