

Modern Folk Quartet - Bio

The original line-up of the Modern Folk Quartet consisted of Douglas Farthing Hatlelid aka "Chip" Douglas, Jerry Yester [b. 9th January 1940's, ?? California], Cyrus Faryar [born Iran, raised Hawaii] and Henry "Tad" Diltz [born in 1938 in Kansas City, Missouri]. They were formed in 1962 from the remnants of the Lexington Three, an aggregation that had featured Douglas, Diltz and the late Stan White. Faryar had previously been a member of Dave Guard's post Kingston Trio group, The Whiskeyhill Singers [the line-up had also featured Judy Henske, whom Yester was already dating and would later marry]. Initially calling themselves The Lexington Four, when White departed, Yester [ex New Christy Minstrels] was recruited and the Modern Folk Quartet was born.

After making a name for themselves in L.A. venues such as The Troubadour, they were signed by Warner Brothers Records. Jim Dickson [later to manage and record The Byrds early in their career] produced their 1963 self-titled, twelve-track collection consisting of traditional numbers and tunes by contemporary scribes Bob Gibson, John Stewart and Chester Powers [aka Dino Valenti]. **"Changes"** which appeared the following year, contained much the same mix of material, with contributions by Gibson, Dylan, the late Phil Ochs and Lee Hays [The Weavers, Almanac Singers]. The Quartet undertook a number of college concert tours, and club engagements at venues such as Manhattan's Village Gate and the Hollywood's Whisky-A-Go-Go. According to Diltz, the MFQ went on to cut some singles for Dunhill, and in 1965 Phil Spector produced them performing the Harry Nilsson song "This Could Be The Night." A folk-rock track, it was used as the theme to the music movie **"The Big TNT Show"** [1966] which featured Baez, The Byrds and Donovan, The Lovin' Spoonful and others, but the cut was never officially released by Spector. The Quartet's rendition finally saw the light of day on the Phil Spector box set **"Back to Mono"** [1991].

Following the demise of the Quartet, Douglas went on to join The Turtles on bass and found fame as a record producer [The Turtles, Linda Ronstadt, The Monkees], Yester replaced Zal Yanovsky in the Lovin' Spoonful and also produced recordings by the Association [his brother Jim was a band member], Tim Buckley and a young Tom Waits. Yester made the album **"Farewell Aldebaran"** with his wife Judy Henske and the pair went on to form the band Rosebud. Faryar cut a pair of albums for Jac Holzman's seminal label Elektra [**"Cyrus"** 1971 ; **"Islands"** 1973], and he was the voice on the Elektra release, **"The Zodiac - Cosmic Sounds"** [1967]. Cyrus also worked with Linda Ronstadt and the late Fred Neil. Diltz found fame as a premier rock music lens man, with credits on over one hundred album covers including the debut by Crosby, Stills and Nash. He was the official photographer at Woodstock, and the Monterey Pop Festival, and his work has appeared in Life, Rolling Stone and Cashbox.

The Quartet reunited in 1985 and cut **"Moonlight Serenade"** for John Stewart's Homecoming Record label. From 1989, while calling themselves MFQ [Modern Folk Quintet – see, *it works!*], the line-up was augmented by the addition of Jim Yester, and they went on to release a quartet of albums on the Pony Canyon label. The 1989 Michael Nesmith album **"The Newer Stuff,"** tracks "Chow Mein And Bowling" featured the MFQ. **"Highway 70,"** released by Polystar, saw the MFQ shrink to the early sixties line-up, and featured guest vocalist Gerry Beckley of America. **"Live At The Ice House 1978"** features recordings made during a series of late seventies MFQ reunion concerts that took place at this Pasadena, California listening room, and was issued for the first time by the Varese Sarabande label in the summer of 2005.

Discography : **"Modern Folk Quartet"** [1963] ; **"Changes"** [1964] ; **"Moonlight Serenade"** [1985] ; **"Live In Japan"** [1989] ; **"Bamboo Saloon"** [1990] ; **"Christmas"** [1990] ; **"Wolfgang"** [1991] ; **"Highway 70"** [1999] ; **"Live At The Ice House 1978"** [2005] :

Arthur Wood.

Kerrville Kronikles 03/05 & 10/05

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