

The Journeymen – Bio

John Edmund Andrew Phillips [b. 30th August 1935 Parris Island, South Carolina ; d. 18th March 2001, Los Angeles, Calif.], Scott McKenzie [b. Phil Blondheim, 10th January 1939 Jacksonville, Florida] and Dick Weissman [b. 21st January 1935 Philadelphia, Penns.]. Phillips and McKenzie met because their mothers were friends. Their first group, in the Doo Wop mould, was The Locals, and subsequently they formed a harmony quartet called The Abstracts. The friends next formed The Smoothies with Bill Cleary and Mike Boran, were signed by Decca Records, made one appearance on “**American Bandstand**,” played some concerts, cut a few tracks, but enjoyed no significant success. In New York the pair met Dick Weissman and turning their attention to folk music, formed The Journeymen. Weissman had learned to play banjo from Seeger's book, “**How To Play The Five String Banjo**,” and came from an educational background having attended Philadelphia Conservatory of Music, Goddard College in Vermont and Columbia University. Dick became the trio's banjoist and guitarist, and *in-house folklorist*. Phillips, on guitar and vocals, was the acknowledged group leader, while McKenzie was the lead tenor and vocal soloist. Karen Dalton [d. 1993] who later cut a couple of folk/blues tinged solo albums attended the trio's early rehearsals.

The Journeymen, followed in the wake of successful late fifties, folk trios such as The Kingston's. Both groups were managed, at the time, by Frank Werber. Signed to Capitol Records, the same label as The Kingston Trio, Phillips' threesome made their debut in 1961 with a twelve-track, self-titled set. The material featured nine Phillips/Weissman co-writes, two Phillips originals and Hedy West's “500 Miles.” Their sophomore album, “**Coming Attraction – Live!**” was an in-concert collection and found McKenzie becoming a regular co-writer alongside Dick and John. The group covered Merle Travis' “Dark As a Dungeon” on the live album, as well as Fred Hellerman's [The Weavers] “I Never Will Marry.” The title of the trio's final album “**New Directions In Folk Music**” [1963] very much mimicked the times, since label mates The Kingston Trio had issued their “**New Frontier**” recording in November 1962. The John Stewart composed Kingston's title track, had been inspired by John Fitzgerald Kennedy's *new frontier* speech, that the senator delivered while accepting the Democratic Party's Presidential nomination on July 15th 1960. Phillips and Stewart co-wrote a number of songs during the early nineteen sixties, and one collaboration “Greenland Whale Fisheries” appears as a bonus track on the 1963 reissue.

Post The Journeymen, Phillips went on to form The New Journeymen with his second wife, Holly Michelle Gilliam. The third member of the new line-up was Marshall Brickman. When Brickman departed, Canadian Denny Doherty of The Halifax Three/Mugwumps joined them. Subsequently Phillips, Doherty and Gilliam became, respectively, “Papa John,” “Papa Denny” and “Mama Michelle” of The Mamas and The Papas, while McKenzie began working as a solo act, the highlight of his career being the 1967 worldwide chart topper “San Francisco [Wear Some Flowers In Your Hair]” penned by Phillips. McKenzie's second and final solo album “**Stained Glass Morning**” featured Scott's own compositions. Weissman continued working in the music business as a producer [eg. Frummox “**Here To There**”]. He earned a degree in Music Business from the University of Colorado, penned film scores, and wrote books about music and the music business. These days, Weissman performs with The Uncommon Thread, and is Assistant Professor of Music Management at the University of Colorado, Denver. One of Weissman's best known books, co-written with Larry Sandberg is “**The Folk Music Sourcebook**” 1976 Alfred A. Knopf, 1976, 275 p., ISBN: 0-394-49684-1.

Discography :

Albums : “**The Journeymen**” reissued on CD with bonus material 2003 [1961] ; “**Coming Attraction – Live!**” reissued on CD with bonus material 2003 [1962] ; “**New Directions In Folk Music**” reissued on CD with bonus material 2003 [1963] :

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