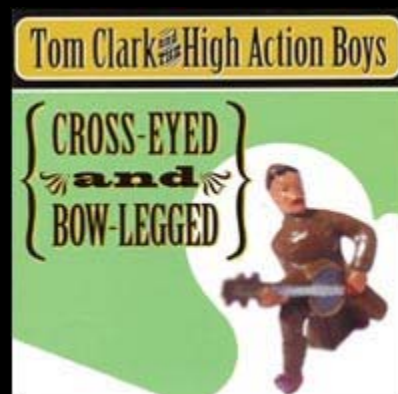


Perfect Sound Forever

online music magazine presents...

Robert Quine



by Thomas Clarke

I was definitely aware of Quine and his work, but I didn't know much about his character or tastes in music. I was always hoping he'd be in Mojo's (Guitars) when I stopped by, because he added so much color to what might normally be your usual slacker East Village musicians hanging around the place.

Years ago, we were doing another demo session for some label or another, and we didn't have a permanent band as much as just "who was available for whatever gig"... which was fine by me at the time. I needed a band for this particular recording. I had laid down basic tracks with Lenny Kaye producing, Tony Shanahan on bass, Joe McGinty on piano and organ and Joseph "Doggie" Hughes on drums out at the wonderful Excello Studios in (yet to be hip) Williamsburg. The songs were two I had just written called "She Had A Good Heart" and "Small Town, New Semester." They needed 'something' and I had to figure out what that was, quick. I was hanging out at Mojo's one day (a daily occurrence then.....my girlfriend would come home from work and say "what did you do today?" "I hung out at Mojo's"...."what else?" "ummmm, nothing.....just hung out at Mojo's!" ahhhhh, to be young and carefree!) and I was playing some old Gretsch and butchering a solo off a Gene Vincent record (which I still can't play) and Quine was hanging out, but I didn't really know if it was him or not, turned around and looked at me and and said "Is that Race With The Devil" by Gene Vincent??!! I was almost too ashamed to admit it...."well....sort of!" Off we went....talking about music from that period when he hit paydirt with me by saying "I saw Buddy Holly in Ohio...before he had his teeth capped" He actually SAW Buddy Holly play. He went on to tell me he had two shrines in his house, one to James Burton (see Elvis/Ricky Nelson/Gram Parsons/Merle Haggard/etc.) and one to guitar great Mickey Baker. I got the nerve to say "Hey, would you be, by any chance, interested in playing on something I'm doing right now?"

Thinking....there's noooo way..... He said "ahhhh, drop a tape off here and I'll get back to you"yeah.....right. Well, the next day I dropped a tape off, and that night I got a phone call, and right out of the gate, barely past 'hello' he said "would it be alright if I played a Byrds type thing on this one and...." In the words of Ralph Kramden..."huminah huminah huminah.....!!!" Is it alright??? So he did it. And it was FUN.

He played on two songs that day. The song he played "the Byrds thing" on was "She Had a Good Heart," and to polish the song off, Jeff Buckley came in and did all the background vocals. It's getting harder and harder to listen to that song with out getting a little choked up! When I would see him after he did those songs, he would always say "When are we gonna finish that record?" He said he wanted to play on the whole thing! It would have been fun, but I had other guys lined up for other things, and some of the other material was already done.

One thing I remember about arranging the session, was getting him there! He had this thing about bridges and tunnels. He got very nervous going through them or over them! Since we were recording in Brooklyn, we arranged for Lenny Kaye to go pick him up and bring him back, and I just thought "wow, considering what this guy has been through, he's unnerved by the simplest everyday thing (for someone in NYC). We're all human! He was also very humble about his playing....he would whip something great off and say "well, you might be able to do better on that one, but I don't know if I can....is that OK?" Hilarious. Gonna miss that guy.

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