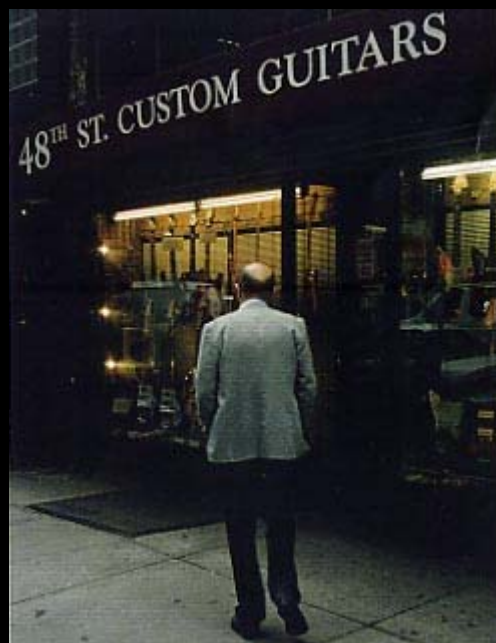


## Perfect Sound Forever

online music magazine presents...

### Robert Quine



#### Short cuts- brief reminiscences

Robin Crutchfield (DNA)

I don't believe I ever saw Bob smile. He always seemed unhappy. And it seemed he loved guitar to the detriment of anything else. When producing the DNA single, he pushed Arto's guitar out front and minimized my keyboard which went contrary to my notions of sonic balance.

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Jim Eigo (Jazz Promo Services)

Quine once told me a great story when he went on tour with the Voidoids in England, how rabid Punk fans would fling spit at the stage to show their 'appreciation.' Quine said that after a couple of nights of being drenched with spit he jumped down into the audience wildly swinging his guitar, smashing heads, bodies, whatever... At the end of one show, a bloke

with a bloody mouth and broken teeth comes up to him to thank him for the best fuckin' show he's ever attended...

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#### Ralph Engelman (college buddy)

I knew Bob at Earlham College and then at Washington University, where he was studying law (1965-68). I remember spending hours with him listening to records, a memorable and profound experience for anyone privileged to have that opportunity. He was a blues/rock/jazz scholar--although not in the academic sense. His record collection was huge. I remember his saying how when he went home he had to smuggle records in because his parents were concerned about the size of his collection and obsession with it. He recalled as a kid travelling in the South with his parents, and being intrigued by the name of Howlin Wolf on a record, the rawness the name promised, and getting the record. The rawness of Howlin Wolf and the lyricism of Jimmy Reed--they always remained the two poles of Bob's music. Once in St. Louis I asked Bob why he was studying law instead of planning to become a musician. He said something to the effect that music was too precious to him. I'm not sure exactly what he meant, but I think it had something to do with a feeling that music was too sacred for him to enter the "business." I think he might have also felt that his abilities on the guitar were not yet up to his high standards. But I think he started gaining more confidence with that band he had in St. Louis, which played fairly regularly somewhere outside the city in a place we called "the barn." We used to go the joints on Delmar Street and hear Howlin Wolf, Muddy Waters and other blues musicians who passed through St. Louis. I remember once hearing Chuck Berry perform Muddy Waters' "I'm Ready" in one of those joints, and when he got to the line about hoping "some schoolboy picks a fight" he looked hard at Bob, a harmless goof, but Bob didn't look amused--there always was a slight paranoid edge to him.

I lost touch with Bob, and it would be presumptuous of me to say what caused him to take his life, but I can't help wondering if it had something to do with his feeling about the preciousness of music and how it was violated by some of the musicians and others he dealt with.

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#### Fred Frith (musician)

I knew Quine, we hung out a bit in 1979-80 when I was new to New York. He checked me out! In fact he used to borrow all kinds of records from me, and usually hated them! But he was kind enough to think of me when Lester Bangs died - as his executor he passed on Lester's Peavey amp, thinking it would be the perfect thing for me, which was nice and unexpected. After that we kind of lost touch, which wasn't hard to do given his dislike of daylight...

I remember him as a reclusive, eccentric and very kind man who had ornery opinions about music and studied guitar styles with passion and an obstinate perfectionism. He was never interested in flash - just doing the right thing at the right time, at which he excelled. A real pop original.

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#### Michael Layne-Heath (writer)

June 2004: a few days ago I copied a photo of him from off his 'official' website, found here:  
[home.earthlink.net/~stayclean/quine.html](http://home.earthlink.net/~stayclean/quine.html)

Made about fifty copies of it, adding in black pen his timeline on top, and underneath the single word "Respect". I then proceeded to walk down the length of Haight Street from Stanyan to Fillmore, sticking the flyers on light and phone poles as I went. I later went to SOMA and the Mission doing the same. Maybe they'll be gone in a week. Maybe they've come down already. It doesn't matter. What matters is the Art Statment in Tribute itself. It's the least I could do, for all the years of pleasure and amazement Quine's work gave myself and so many others.

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Arto Lindsay (musician)

bob quine produced the first recording i ever made, the dna single "you and you" b/w "little ants" for charles ball's lust/unlust records. i don't remember much about the session except how encouraging quine was.

i later got a chance to perform with quine in john zorn's morricone project "the big gun down". other's have probably told you that quine was as valuable for his caustic humor as for his guitar playing. before our big show at BAM, on hearing i didn't have a battery for one of my guitar pedals, quine said "you insect, don't you know you are always supposed to carry an extra battery?" i used that "you insect" line for a long time.

i was impressed with quine's playing of course, especially the way he would let time go by between statements, content to listen and choose his moments. and i loved the obvious delight he took in other people's playing.

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Bob Pfeifer (Human Switchboard)

Of course he was fucking great and a nice man even if he was eccentric, like any of us aren't. I never saw a bad side to him, not that I would have.

He was supposed to play on my solo album and when it came time to he kind of flaked out of it but we spoke. He didn't disappear on me. I had Ivan Julian on the record so I thought that would be cool to have both of them even if on different tracks. Maybe that spooked him but it's not like the album had anything to do with the Voivoids. And for some reason it didn't piss me off at all -- it was kind of like he had a phobia about leaving his apartment it seemed or something.

I felt sympathetic towards him. Lester Bangs was the one who told him about me and me that he was very cool and smart. It would have been Lester who was the one that gave one of us the other's number and paved the way for one of us to call the other. Bob and I talked anyways once in awhile on the phone like about records and sounds and guitar stuff. It was weird I never went to his place we would just talk on the phone out of the blue once in awhile.

He may have been the greatest guitarist in the entire "punk" scene as I remember it the only competitor may have been

Verlaine and I don't know that I am not giving Tom a nod here more for writing than playing. Technically Bob was better. His playing was jagged and stabbing with atonal overtones but appropriate in the same way Keith Richards is appropriate relative to blues even though he is radical and jagged next to an Eric Clapton.

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### Suzanne Rhatigan (musician)

Robert had a subtle genius which I was privileged to have on my album *To Hell With Love*. It was a more mainstream record than Robert would have been known for, but he added wonderful texture and melodic depth which, not wanting to sound falsely modest, truly made it a more interesting record.

It was Fred Maher who brought Robert, Mathew Sweet and Drew Vogelmann in on the sessions and Kate Hyman at Imago who included Berni Worrall in the mix combining with my long time collaborators Matt Backer and Martyn Barker. It was quite a interesting clash of heavy weight musos from both sides of the pond and to be honest I felt out of my depth, though I had a wonderful time. Sadly the album failed to 'shift the necessary units' to justify the huge costs involved but it was a great experience...

I should add though that he scared the crap out of me. He said very little which sadly compelled me to babble incoherently every time we happened to be alone together. One of the only occasions I heard him laugh in the studio was while watching Looney Tunes/Merrie Melodies cartoons on which he was quite an authority. He had a phobia about elevators which meant he had to walk the 8 or so flights to the studio usually carrying his guitar which he brought home every evening to work out his parts for the next day. He seemed to lack confidence in his technical ability but I don't recall him ever doing more than one take.

As I understand it his death came not long after his wife died, which I guess doesn't surprise me because though I didn't know him personally somehow I did know that he loved her very dearly.

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### Jim Testa (writer, editor, Jersey Beat)

I was a big fan of Richard Hell & The Void Oids and saw them play whenever I could back in the late Seventies/early Eighties -- at CBGB, Max's Kansas City, The Showplace out in Dover NJ, where a lot of the CB's bands did their suburban gigs... Quine, with that quiet, seething, almost psychotic intensity, always reminded me of that Michael O'Donohue character on Saturday Night Live, Mr. Mike. Especially the skit where Mr. Mike sticks red-hot skewers in his eyes...

I saw Quine years later playing with Fernando Saunders behind Lou Reed. I always knew that Quine was an amazing guitarist. That night, I discovered he was a great one too. He didn't play any of that spastic noise guitar from the Void Oids. Every lead, every note perfectly complemented each song; some of it was even beautiful.

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## Mike Watt (musician)

June 2004: ... found out about this sad news regarding bob quine's passing. I'd like to say his playing was really inspiring and wild. lee ranaldo had me record a version of dylan's "visions of johana" thirteen or something years w/him and who was on guitar (besides lee)? none other than bob quine! steve shelley was on drums. well, me and d. boon first heard him on richard hell's "blank generation" single and very much were blown away (as w/the other guy on guitar, ivan julian and of course, richard hell himself) - made a huge impression on us. it was a trip to get to both spiel and play alongside him that day at wharton's in nyc - I must've asked a million questions (all foamed-up) but he was so nice to me. he played righteous too. I heard he was kind of belig but he was nothing but a gentleman to me and the other cats there. it's a great memory for me to look back on. he told me that day the first guy he saw on electric guitar was buddy holly. that was trippy

See the rest of the [Quine tribute](#)

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