



# JUST FOR THE RECORD

by Dennis Barker



## The Byrds: *Eight Miles High*

"*Eight Miles High*", well, weren't we all! Members of the Byrds had little luck describing their 1966 psychedelic hit, as nothing more than a litany of sights and events related to their 1965 English tour, claiming the title referenced nothing more than the altitude of the plane as they flew across the pond. Sure. If you were spending those days lurking around the halls of your high school, doing those things you mother told you not to, then the Byrds defensive banter didn't fool you at all.

Roger McGuinn once described the Byrds as "Dylan meets the Beatles". Comprised of band leader McGuinn along with Gene Clark, David Crosby, Chris Hillman and Michael Clarke, the Band, formed in 1964, as the *Jet Set*, later tried the *Beefeaters*, and eventually settled on the *Byrds*, a la the misspelled "Beatles". The band would combine elements of melodic pop with Bob Dylan style message lyrics, creating a new genre which would be dubbed folk-rock. The Byrds would score hits with 2 Dylan songs, "Mr. Tambourine Man" & "All I Really Want To Do", and the very successful Pete Seeger biblical based "Turn, Turn, Turn".

In 1966, the Byrds would again stand on the forward edge of Rock & Roll. Although several artists were moving in that direction, most consider the Byrds "*Eight Miles High*" to be the first true psychedelic recording. However, the Byrds creativity would not be amply rewarded. Despite the Bands denial, the record was largely perceived as a "drug song", and the campaign in U.S. radio to clamp down on airplay resulted in bans on some radio stations, stunting the records success (reaching only #14 on the US charts)

For all the ingenuity the Byrds brought to Rock & Roll during the mid sixties, the band would sputter & spurt through the end of the decade and into the 1970's, and tension, arguments & artistic disagreement would result in numerous lineup changes. Finally, in 1972 the original 5 band members would reunite for a final album. Entitled "*Byrds*", the recording garnered only mixed reviews, and a tour to support the record never materialized. As the great John Lennon would have put it "this bird has flown".

**THE BYRDS, *Eight Miles High*:  
COLUMBIA RECORD LABEL .... #43578 (RELEASED MARCH 14th 1966)**

Goldmine price guide to 45 rpm records, Values original copies of *Eight Miles High*, in near mint condition, with original picture sleeve, at \$60.00

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