

# WHY GENE CLARK LEFT THE BYRDS!

This is Gene Clark, who left The Byrds to make it on his own.



Why did Gene Clark leave The Byrds?

The answer to the question why a popular pop singer would leave one of the most successful groups in the world has got to be surprising and exciting!

To get it, we asked Michelle Straubing, an old friend of Gene's, to sit down with him and bring us the exclusive story.

As soon as Gene returned from a visit to his home town of Kansas City, he agreed to sit down and talk about his decision to quit The Byrds.

This is Gene's story, as Michelle reports it...

Suddenly, Gene walked into the office. He smiled his famous toothless grin and said he'd be ready in a few minutes.

The grin and his casual dress were the only visible signs of the old Gene. Otherwise, it was a new Gene Clark that walked through the door. Still recovering from his state of physical exhaustion, he seemed quite pale and he walked at a much slower pace.

He returned to invite me into a small office where we wouldn't be disturbed. He closed the door and sat down behind the desk.

It was now even more apparent that he had been quite ill. Whereas he joked quite a bit when he was a Byrd, he was more serious now. After he assured me that he was feeling better, he went on to say that his decision to leave wasn't a sudden one.

"I had been thinking about it for quite some time. I finally made the decision that I wanted to leave and go solo. We sat down as a group and talked it over. We all agreed that it could be worked out and that The Byrds would continue as a group of four. I realize that when a member leaves a group, they always lose something, but they are getting along fine without me."

Had there been a conflict within the group that helped him make his decision to leave?

"No, there was never any conflict. I just wanted to be more individual. But I do miss the good times we had together. Last night I showed up at a Byrds' recording session. During the breaks we had jam sessions and it was just like old times. It was groovy."

Gene's mention of "old times" reminded me of the now historic Byrds opening at The Trip, a Hollywood club. Although this was to be The Byrds first Hollywood foursome appearance, Gene surprised everyone when he showed up in the audience. Although Gene didn't want to join the group, he consented to getting on stage, to introduce them. However, once he was on stage, there was no turning back. The fans crowded

FLIP

This is the way it is with The Byrds today—four Byrds of a fab feather flocking together.



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around the stage and wouldn't let him off until the end of the set. So, probably for the last time, The Byrds flocked together again for a public appearance.

Gene talked about the experience as though it was one he'd never forget, and, for a fleeting moment, he had a sparkle in his eyes.

"It was a really groovy. It's great to know that your fans want you and appreciate you so much. But I doubt that this will ever happen again. I will continue to write for them and other groups, but my singing days with The Byrds are over."

"But don't misunderstand," he continued, anticipating my next question, "I'm not leaving show business. I'll be back on the scene very soon. The only way I can explain it is that you will understand my leaving in the future when I start singing on my own."

During our brief conversation, he gave the feeling that he wasn't telling everything. But Gene knows what he wants to do and, knowing Gene, he'll make a success of his future as he has always done. It's part of the Gene Clark charm.

FLIP

This was the lively line-up of The Byrds when Gene was still a member of the group: (From left to right) Gene, Jim, Chris, Mike and David.

