

Guitarist Howard Roberts

Howard Roberts was born in Phoenix, Arizona in 1929. He began playing guitar at age 8 and by age 15 was playing gigs in and around the Phoenix area. In 1950 (at age 20) Howard decided to move to Los Angeles, and through hard work and the invaluable assistance of fellow guitarist/arranger-composer Jack



Marshall, Howard met and began playing with some of L.A.'s very best musicians, including Bobby Troup, Chico Hamilton and Barney Kessel. This led to a job with Bobby Troup and circa 1956¹ to a solo recording contract with Verve Records. At around that same time as he signed with Verve, Howard decided to concentrate on recording/studio work - work that he would do nearly non- stop until the early 1970's.

Howard's studio career has to be one of the most prolific² ever. He played rhythm guitar, lead guitar, bass and even mandolin on an incredible number of

television and movie projects. He also backed jazz, pop, country and rock 'n roll artists, and was heard on thousands of records over his career.

But Howard wasn't just a studio musician. Beginning in the late 60's Howard's interest in studio work diminished³. He began to travel and hold guitar seminars all around the country. Howard had a genuine⁴ talent for teaching and curriculum⁵ development, a talent he shared with his wife Patty. This interest/talent led to the founding of a school for guitarists: GIT (The Guitar Institute of Technology). He also established Playback Publishing and wrote several books as part of a structured guitar music curriculum. And if that wasn't enough, for several years Howard wrote a monthly column ("Jazz Improvisation") for Guitar Player magazine.

Howard had already recorded under his own name on at least one other label (Verve Records) before he signed with Capitol Records. Prior to that (circa 1955) he recorded at least two records as part of pianist/song stylist Bobby Troup's band on the Bethlehem label. "Color Him Funky," and "H.R. is a Dirty Guitar Player" are the first two albums Howard recorded for Capitol, and were recorded within a few months of each other in 1963. The outstanding rhythm section is the same on both dates - Chuck Berghofer on bass and Earl Palmer on drums. Paul Bryant and Burkley Kendrix are on organ.

Most of Howard Roberts' recordings through the years, particularly a long string for Capitol in the '60's and into the '70's were quite commercial, featuring brief versions of current pop tunes. He did some good work with The Magic Band on some live recordings at Donte's in Los Angeles that showed hints⁶ of what he could do. A versatile⁷ studio player, Roberts finally had an opportunity in 1977 to record some non-nonsense⁸, straight-ahead jazz. "The Real Howard Roberts," was a stand out⁹, with a good band behind him interpreting jazz standards.

Howard Roberts died June 28, 1992

Howard Roberts is a member of the prestigious Gibson Hall of Fame. His guitars, personally designed and marketed by Gibson, are the H.R. Custom, with its arch top and oval hole combining classic-acoustic and electric guitars, and the newer H.R. Fusion model.

Source: James Nadal

¹ [sz:kə] - около, приблизительно, почти

² богатый, плодovitый, плодоносный

³ уменьшать, сокращать, ослаблять

⁴ подлинный, искренний, настоящий

⁵ курс обучения, учебная программа, программа образования

⁶ намек, совет, рекомендация

⁷ многоликий, разнообразный, разносторонний, многофункциональный

⁸ деловой, серьезный, нешуточный, строгий

⁹ to stand out – выгодно отличаться, выделяться (~among, as); stand-out – лучше всех, исключительный