# BLUEGRASS MANDOLIN EXTRAVAGANZA

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### Disc I

BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY OLD JOE CLARK

THE CAKEWALK Wavearing Stranger

I'm Going Back to Old Kentucky

McCoury Blues

DOWN HOME WALTZ

MISS IZZIE

PANHANDLE COUNTRY

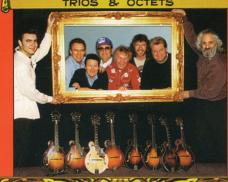
One-Legged Man Elge Tennessee Bli

B NATURAL

No You Stand Back I Wonder Where



PERFORMING SOLOS, DUETS
TRIOS & OCTETS



Produced for

DAWG PRODUCTIONS by

RONNIE MCCOURY & DAVID GRISMAN

Executive Producer - Craig Miller

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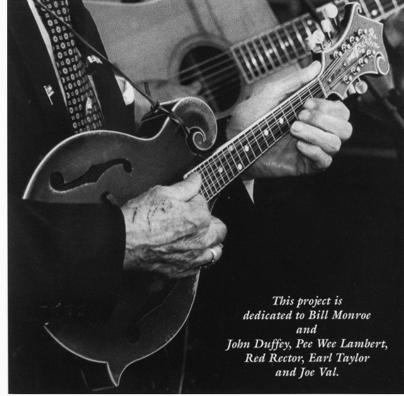
## Disc 2

ROANOKE
CATTLE IN THE CANE
DIME HORDOWN
ASHOKAN EAREWELL
CUMBERLAND GAP
SASSTERASS
GOLDEN SLEPPERS
SAY OLD MAN
WESTERALLA WALTZ
PLAY IT PRESTLY, ME
MESICAN STOME
DUSTY MILLER
CAULM MANDOLIN
BOSTON BOY
WHO AT MY DOOR
IS STANDING!
BLUE MOON
OF KENTUCKY
WORLD'S SHOREIST
ROYMOLINES

# BLUEGRASS MANDOLIN EXTRAVAGANZA

SAM BUSH GRISMAN COURY NOLDS ORNE DAVID GRISMAN BUSH RECOURY BOBBY OSBORNE RICKY SKAGGS WAKEFIELD DEL MECOURY







1. Blue Moon of Kentucky	Ensemble	1:22
2. OLD JOE CLARK	Ensemble with Del McCoury (guitar)	5:13
3. THE CAKEWALK	Jesse McReynolds with Del	2:50
4. WAYFARING STRANGER	Sam Bush and David Grisman with Del	6:16
5. I'M GOING BACK TO OLD KEN	TUCKY Sam with Del	1:31
6. McCoury Blues	Ronnie McCoury with Del	2:20
7. CHEROKEE LADY	Bobby Osborne with Ronnie (guitar)	3:39
8. DOWN HOME WALTZ	Buck White, Ronnie and David with Del	3:24
9. BLUE GRASS SPECIAL	Ricky Skaggs with Del	3:25
10. Miss Izzie	Frank Wakefield with Del	2:17
11. CATNIP	Frank and Ronnie with Del	2:30
12. PANHANDLE COUNTRY	Ensemble with Del	4:41
13. ONE-LEGGED MAN	Buck with Del	1:43
14. EAST TENNESSEE BLUES	Bobby and Jesse with Del	3:03
15, B NATURAL	Ronnie and David with Del	2:33
16. No You STAND BACK	David with Del	2:40
17. I Wonder Where You Are T	CONIGHT? Ensemble with Del	4:03

1. ROANOKE	Ronnie and David with Del	2:47
2. CATTLE IN THE CANE	Sam with Del	2:48
3. DIXIE HOEDOWN	Ensemble with Del	5:42
4. ASHOKAN FAREWELL Bob,	David and Ronnie with Terry Eldredge (guitar)	4:25
5. CUMBERLAND GAP	Ricky with Del	2:40
6. SASSYFRASS	Buck and Ricky with Ronnie (quitar)	2:24
7. GOLDEN SLIPPERS	Frank, David and Ron	2:34
8. SAY OLD MAN	Bobby with Ronnie (guitar)	3:21
9. WESTPHALIA WALTZ	Jesse and Bobby with Del	1:38
10. PLAY IT PRETTY, ME	Frank with Del	3:15
11. MEXICAN STOMP	Frank and David with Ronnie (quitar)	3:02
12. DUSTY MILLER	Ensemble with Del	4:30
13. Cajun Mandolin	Jesse, Ronnie and David with Del	3:58
14. BOSTON BOY	Ricky, Ronnie and David with Del	3:03
15. WHO AT MY DOOR IS STAND	ING? Jesse with Del	3:11
16. BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY	Ensemble with Del	3:35
17. WORLD'S SHORTEST RAWHIDE	Sam	0:07
	Total time -	57-1



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SAM BUSH GRISMAN MCCOURY OSBORNE DAVID RONNIE MCCOURY BOBBY OSBORNE RICKY SKAGGS BUCK WHITE BUCK WHITE DEL

### Produced by RONNIE MCCOURY and DAVID GRISMAN

Recorded live to two-track January 19-22, 1998 by DAVID FERGUSON at COWBOY ARMS HOTEL & RECORDING SPA, Nashville, Tennessee

> Additional recording at DAWG STUDIOS, Mill Valley, California by DAVID DENNISON

Mastered by PAUL STUBBLEBINE at ROCKET LABS and HYDE ST. STUDIOS

Notes by TONY WILLIAMS and NEIL V. ROSENBERG

Musical transcription by JOHN MCGANN

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# **PRODUCER'S NOTES**

**REMEMBER WELL** my first glimpse of this project. One night close to 10 years ago, I was driving my dad's 1954 GMC coach. We were somewhere in Virginia, on Interstate 81, driving through the Shenandoah Valley as we had so many times before and have since.

That particular night I was thinking about all the different great mandolin players in bluegrass

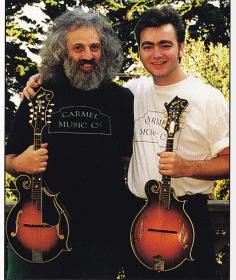
music and how influential their styles were to me and my generation of mandolinists, or pickers as we like to call them. I thought it would be great to have all those mando-kings on one recording, a kind of Bluegrass Mandolin 101. This would be a recording that not only showcased great stylists but taught lessons in tone, timing and technique.

I carried the idea around a long time before I approached the only man who could give this project life, David Grisman. He understood totally and gave his guidance and direction wholeheartedly. Dawg, along with six of the greatest mandolin pickers bluegrass music has ever known, helped me make this long-lived late-night dream come true.

I thank you all, and bluegrass mandolin thanks you too. It was an honor to make music with you guys.

A third-generation aspiring mandolin player and fan.

> RONNIE MCCOURY Nashville, Tennessee January 1999



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRODUCER'S FOREWORD — Ronnie McCoury & David Grisman

### INTRODUCTION — Tony Williamson

Tony Williamson is a well-known bluegrass and classical mandolin player and scholar. He lives in Siler City, North Carolina, where he owns and operates Mandolin Central, specializing in mandolins and other string instruments and accessories.

### ABOUT THE SONGS

### ABOUT THE MUSICIANS — Neil V. Rosenberg

Neil V. Rosenberg is the Grammy award-winning author of Bluegrass: A History (University of Illinois Press, 1985), the definitive work on the subject. He also plays banjo and managed Bill Monroe's Brown County Jamboree at Bean Blossom, Indiana during the sixties.

### "PANHANDLE COUNTRY" TRANSCRIPTION — John McGann

John McGann is a talented mandolinist (1985 National Champion), guitarist and recording artist from the Boston area whose musical transcriptions have appeared in books and publications by Mel Bay, Hal Leonard, Acoustic Guitar and Homespun Tapes.



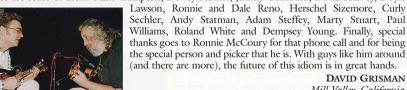
For additional information on mandolin music and performers, we recommend the Mandolin World News. Published by David Grisman from 1976 to 1984, this landmark magazine includes articles, columns, music, interviews, transcriptions and more on all styles of mandolin music. All 31 back issues of Mandolin World News are currently available from Musix, PO Box 231005, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. E-mail: MUSIX1@aol.com.

HEN RONNIE MCCOURY CALLED ME with the idea for this project shortly after New Year's Day 1998, my reaction was immediate: "Why hadn't I thought of this?" We both then flipped into high gear, and within a few weeks I was in Nashville sitting in with my mandolin heroes and peers, figuring out harmony parts, changing strings, checking balances and having the bluegrass mandolin experience of a lifetime.

Five days later I was on my way back to California with almost 40 reels of newly recorded bluegrass mandolin performances. After listening to all that music we could only conclude that there was plenty of great material for two whole CDs, and why not make it available? Hence this special package and the title Bluegrass Mandolin Extravaganza.

Bluegrass mandolin necessarily begins and ends with its father and champion, Bill Monroe. His musical aura certainly pervaded every session, and one by one each player repeatedly paid Bill homage in his own stylistic way. In reflecting on these players, it's interesting to note that four of them (Buck White, Jesse McReynolds, Bobby Osborne and Frank Wakefield) were born before the advent of Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys, and the other four (myself, Sam Bush, Ricky Skaggs and Ronnie McCoury) after. Together we span and represent five decades (from 1929 to 1967) of the evolution of the bluegrass mandolin idiom up to the present.

I'd like to thank all the participants who showed up and pitched in with a great spirit of camaraderie and mutual respect and admiration. I'd also like to thank and acknowledge all the other great bluegrass mandolinists who were not with us, because we had to draw the line somewhere. These are some of them: Mike Compton, Dewey Farmer, Jimmy Gaudreau, David Harvey, Doyle



**DAVID GRISMAN** Mill Valley, California January 1999

N BLUEGRASS MANDOLIN EXTRAVAGANZA, David Grisman and Ronnie McCoury have assembled an extremely gifted group of musicians who are arguably the most significant bluegrass mandolin players on the scene today. In terms of public approval and overall influence on bluegrass music, these are the players to reckon with. Presented like a festival-style mandolin workshop, in an informal setting where the individual players can strut their stuff individually or use their common influences to blend together, this unique live recording event exudes spontaneous creativity and offers both listener and player many wonderful perspectives on the evolving world of bluegrass mandolin.

When speaking of bluegrass mandolin playing, the name Bill Monroe inevitably must come up, as he was the driving force behind the genre. Bill passed on in 1996, but his influence is clearly represented here not only as the formative inspiration for these players, but in the very tunes and even the type of mandolins played. Of the 34 pieces presented here, nine were either written or recorded by Monroe while two more are dedicated to him. Listening to this collection of tunes, one might consider the unique style of this music and its relationship to the history of the mandolin in America.

Evidence exists that the mandolin had made its appearance in America by the time of Thomas Jefferson; however, it did not spread widely until late in the nineteenth century. By then, the fiddle and banjo had already become the mainstays of rural musical traditions, while the mandolin remained primarily an instrument of urban devotees, especially in areas steeped



Bill Monroe

tune styles (descended from the Scots-Irish tradition), blues (from the Afro-American tradition), gospel and even a dash of the popular swing styles of the thirties and fourties. He stirred this stew with his own interpretations to create a singular style. The players on Bluegrass Mandolin Extravaganza recapitulate this formula with archaic fiddle sounds ("Old Joe Clark," "Cattle in the Cane," "Dusty Miller," "Cajun Mandolin"), blues ("McCoury Blues," "Blue Grass Special"), gospel ("Wayfaring Stranger"), Western swing ("Sassyfrass") and hard-core Monroe ("I'm Going Back to Old Kentucky," "Panhandle Country").

playing owes more to great fiddlers like Howdy Forrester and early country guitarists like Hank Garland, whereas Jesse is in a world all his own, having created a unique style based on banjo rolls.

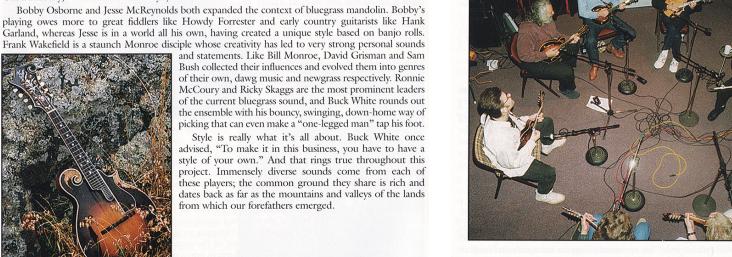




Lloyd Loar (front center) and the Gibsonians

model's design incorporated Florentine curls with a violin-like sound chamber that powerfully projected a well-balanced, warmer tone such as had never been heard before. For the classical music of the period, however, it was a complete flop: few of the players of that time felt compelled to switch from their delicate, well-blending bowlbacks to the powerful, individualistic sound of the F-5.

Just a blink of the cosmic eye after the death of Lloyd Loar, Bill Monroe found a second-hand Loar mandolin sitting in a Miami barbershop window in 1942. Bill played that instrument for the rest of his life, and the F-5 became the bluegrass mandolin. Whether inspired by Monroe, or because of the perfection of this style of mandolin for bluegrass music, everyone on this recording either plays an original Lloyd Loar F-5 or a modern copy of the same design. Bill used this unique-sounding instrument to combine elements of all his influences into a rural string band style that became known as "bluegrass," in honor of his native Kentucky. In his music, Monroe combined elements of fiddle



# NOTES ON THE SONGS

Disc 1 / Track 1:

### **BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY** (Monroe)

Mandolin ensemble.

This Bill Monroe forties (and fifties) classic was recorded by Elvis Presley at his very first session for Sun Records in 1954. It is given a unique reading by the eight mandolin stylists, playing in an ensemble tremolo style reminiscent of the mandolin orchestras of days gone by. It serves as a fitting preamble for this collection, evoking the spirit of the "father of bluegrass."

Disc 1 / Track 2:

### **OLD JOE CLARK** (Traditional)

Ensemble with Del McCoury, quitar.

Order of solos: Ricky, Sam, Ronnie, David, Buck, Jesse, Bobby, Frank, ensemble.

Traditional fiddle tunes have always been featured in the bluegrass repertoire. Bill Monroe based much of his music on fiddle music, both stylistically and thematically, which is logical since the mandolin and violin are tuned alike. "Old Joe Clark" is an old standby that everyone felt at home with. David's solo pays homage to Bill's 1961 recording of the tune (on Bluegrass Ramble, Decca D14731) in which he employs a D drone (A string on the fifth fret) against the melody played on the E string.

Disc 1 / Track 3:

### THE CAKEWALK (McReynolds)

Jesse McReynolds with Del.

This McReynolds original displays Jesse's unique "cross-picking" style in its full regalia. Jesse invented this technique, based on Earl Scruggs's banjo roll, and has continued to develop it to an incredible level of sophistication. "McReynolds style" has remained a singular innovation in bluegrass music. Employing a flatpick with great dexterity, Jesse's basic picking pattern is down-up-up on the third, first and second (or fourth, second and third) strings.

Disc 1 / Track 7:

### CHEROKEE LADY (Osborne)

Bobby Osborne with Ronnie (quitar).

Bobby Osborne has long occupied a position of great influence over many of the leading bluegrass players. This original tune displays many of the techniques that Bobby has utilized through the years. The bouncy tempo is also a hallmark of his highly individualistic approach to the mandolin.

Disc 1 / Track 8:

### **DOWN HOME WALTZ** (White)

### Buck White (center), Ronnie (left) and David (right) with Del.

This sweet tune was written by Buck White years ago and recorded with his group, the Down Home Folks, on the album That Down Home Feeling (Ridge-Runner RRR-0006). The arrangement heard here is a mandolin trio featuring Buck and the producers. Buck and David also met at the historic Fincastle, Virginia bluegrass festival in 1965. The two have harmonized before,

on David's debut LP for Rounder in 1975, and on Buck's solo album, More Pretty Girls Than One (Sugar Hill).



### BLUE GRASS SPECIAL (Monroe)

Ricky Skaggs with Del.

Ricky Skaggs is certainly one of Bill Monroe's champions. Ricky's enormous popularity in the mainstream country music arena could have easily kept a man of lesser musical integrity busy trying to crank out hits. But the call of bluegrass was too powerful to keep Ricky away, and he returned to the fold, focusing much well-deserved attention on bluegrass music and its creator. This rarely performed Monroe original was recorded at Bill's first Columbia session in 1945. Ricky displays some well-learned lessons from the master before putting his own spin on this mandolin blues classic.



Disc 1 / Track 4:

### WAYFARING STRANGER (Traditional)

Sam Bush (left channel) and David Grisman (right channel) with Del.

As Sam explains, he and David go back a long way (1965). This haunting melody is a staple of the bluegrass gospel repertoire. David recorded a version of it on his 1983 Warner Bros. release, Dawg Grass/ Dawg Jazz, utilizing a rare Lloyd Loar mando-viola (10-string mandolin). Here he plays a 1937 Gibson F-5 with a consecutive serial number to Sam's own 1937 model, "Hoss." David's mandolin has an original extra-long neck joining the body at the 16th fret. which is probably why he ends on a higher note.

Disc 1 / Track 5:

### I'M GOING BACK TO OLD KENTUCKY (Monroe)

Sam with Del.

This Bill Monroe song, first recorded in 1947 (but not released until 1949) with Blue Grass Boys Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, Chubby Wise and Cedric Rainwater, is the perfect vehicle for a Sam Bush

mandolin tour de force. Sam's playing is heavily influenced by Monroe's own solos on the original record, but after several choruses he is clearly on his own impeccable turf.

Disc 1 / Track 6:

### MCCOURY BLUES (McCoury)

Ronnie McCoury with Del.

Blues has always been a big influence on the music of Del McCoury and his band. Though not a standard blues form, this Monroe-esque mandolin piece in the key of É is filled with bluesy licks and runs. Ronnie wrote this tune in 1991 and it typifies his mandolin style, which has always embodied much of Bill Monroe's spirit.

Disc 1 / Track 10:

### MISS IZZIE (Wakefield)

### Frank Wakefield with Del.

One of the early Monroe disciples, Frank Wakefield forged his own path in the mid-fifties and early sixties on recordings with his legendary partner, Red Allen. A 16-year-old David Grisman first heard Frank (and Bill Monroe) on a Sunday afternoon in August, 1961 at New River Ranch in Rising Sun, Maryland. Backstage, Bill and Frank played mandolin duets together, and Grisman's musical life was forever altered. This original tune, dedicated to a friend, combines hard-core bluegrass and classical influences.

Disc 1 / Track 11:

### **CATNIP** (Wakefield)

### Frank (left) and Ronnie (right) with Del.

In the fall of 1963, Frank Wakefield and Red Allen recorded this Wakefield original at a session for Folkways organized by fledgling producers Peter Siegel and David Grisman. That recording also featured the revolutionary banjo playing of Bill Keith. An earlier duet version can also be heard on The Kitchen Tapes (Acoustic Disc ACD-11), recorded by Red and Frank in Frank's kitchen. This new arrangement features Ronnie playing harmony parts and adding some powerful rhythm.



Disc 1 / Track 12:

### PANHANDLE COUNTRY (Monroe) Ensemble with Del.

Order of solos: Ricky (melody A part), David (melody B part), Ronnie, David, Buck, Jesse, Bobby, Frank, Ricky, Sam.

Bill Monroe first recorded this original tune in 1958 featuring twin fiddles played by Kenny Baker and Bobby Hicks. Bill only played the bridge of the tune on that recording, yet his influence from that short solo pervades nearly everyone's interpretation on this arrangement. True to the original recording, Del McCoury re-creates Ed Mayfield's classic guitar solo, the only one on the project, just as he did for nearly every show as a Blue Grass Boy.





Disc 1 / Track 14:

### EAST TENNESSEE BLUES

(Traditional) Jesse and Bobby with Del.

This catchy fiddle tune is the perfect vehicle for the contrasting styles of these two legendary mandolin kings. In 1965, a 20-year-old David Grisman recorded Jesse and Bobby playing mandolin duets in a shed behind the stage at a rainy-day performance in Maryland. This is their first duet recording since that time, and the first ever on a CD.



### **B NATURAL** (Grisman/McCoury)

Ronnie (left) and David (right) with Del.

The key of B (often referred to as "B natural" by Bill Monroe) is the tonal center of choice for many bluegrass masterpieces. This archetypal medium-tempo tribute contains melodic references to several Monroe songs including "I'm Blue, I'm Lonesome" and "My Rose of Old Kentucky." Ronnie and David both play mandolins made by Steve Gilchrist of Warnambool, Australia, the leading builder of contemporary bluegrass mandolins.

### Disc 2 / Track 1:

### **ROANOKE** (Monroe)

### Ronnie (left) and David (right) with Del.

From the pen of Bill Monroe, this breakneck-speed twin-fiddle tune featured fiddlers Charlie Cline and Bobby Hicks when it was recorded on the last day of the year 1954. Ronnie and David have frequently jammed on "Roanoke" at live gigs since 1987. David also recorded the tune in 1973 with Muleskinner, a short-lived "supergroup" featuring Clarence White, Bill Keith, Richard Greene and Peter Rowan.

### Disc 2 / Track 2: CATTLE IN THE CANE

(Traditional)

Sam with Del.

Sam Bush is a fantastic multi-instrumentalist, equally at home with mandolin (his admitted first love) or fiddle, not to mention slide mandolin, electric guitar or just about anything else with strings. This oft-interpreted traditional fiddle tune is one of his favorites, and features many of the innovative rhythmic and ornamental techniques Sam has brought to the mandolin.

### Disc 2 / Track 3:

### **DIXIE HOEDOWN** (McReynolds) Ensemble with Del.

Order of solos: Buck, David, Ronnie, Sam, Ricky, Frank, Bobby, Jesse.

Although Jesse McReynolds wrote this popular bluegrass instrumental, no mandolin playing appeared on the original Starday recording. Jesse played twin fiddles along with Virginia Boy Vassar Clements while other solo chores were handled by Bobby Thompson, the great banjo innovator. This rendition features the whole crew dissecting Jesse's melody in their own fashion. Jesse utilizes another of his amazing techniques, that of "splitting" the strings. This involves fretting one of the pair of strings with a fingernail, creating a "cross-tuned" colorful sound.

Disc 1 / Track 13:

Buck with Del.

Another Buck White mandolin original, featuring the composer caught in the act of teaching the piece to his accompanist (while also relating the curious story behind it), makes for great entertainment. As Del McCoury recognized from the loping melody, you can almost hear Buck's brother-in-law hopping around the house on one leg.



ONE-LEGGED MAN (White)

Disc 1 / Track 16: NO YOU STAND BACK (Grisman)

David with Del.

This fiddle-style tune was written by David in the early seventies for a self-published instructional booklet called "Twelve Tunes in Nine Keys." Although Grisman has certainly ventured into a great number of different styles, his bluegrass playing has always remained conservatively traditional...at least most of the time, as on this piece.

Disc 1 / Track 17:

### I WONDER WHERE YOU ARE TONIGHT? (Bond) Ensemble with Del.

Order of solos: Sam (verse), Ronnie (chorus), David (verse), Buck (chorus), Jesse (verse), Bobby (chorus), Frank (verse), Ricky (verse).

Another medium-tempo standard from the bluegrass repertoire, this familiar tune provides the perfect setting for these players to display their diverse stylistic wares. Jesse recorded this tune with Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys on their Epic LP, Bluegrass Classics, currently available on Bear Family Records.



Disc 2 / Track 4:

### ASHOKAN FAREWELL (Unger) Bobby (center), Ronnie (left) and David (right) with Terry Eldredge (quitar).

A latter-day fiddle classic, this beautiful tune, written by old-time fiddler Jay Unger, was the ever-present melody on the soundtrack of the popular Ken Burns PBS documentary The Civil War. Bobby suggested this as a mandolin trio and Ronnie and David joined right in. Terry Eldredge, of the Osborne Brothers band, is heard on guitar. Bobby plays his Lloyd Loar F-5 on this cut.

Disc 2 / Track 5:

### **CUMBERLAND GAP** (Traditional)

Ricky with Del.

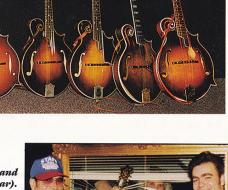
Once again Ricky Skaggs comes up with a rarely heard (on mandolin) example of just how steeped in traditional music he really is. Ricky is another extremely talented multi-instrumentalist who, in addition to mandolin, also plays great fiddle (not to mention his powerful high lonesome singing).

This galloping rendition of the banjo classic, learned from an old-time fiddler, is a great vehicle for Ricky's mandolin-fiddle tune style.

Disc 2 / Track 6:

**SASSYFRASS** (White) Buck (right) and Ricky (left) with Ronnie (quitar).

Buck White is Ricky Skaggs father-in-law as well as one heck of a swing piano (and mandolin) picker. On this White original, father and son-inlaw trade hot licks and solos—with the support of Ronnie McCoury's lively rhythm guitar-on his swing-influenced romp.



### GOLDEN SLIPPERS (Traditional)

### Frank (center), Ronnie (left) and David (right).

This minstrel-era favorite features mandolins in three-part harmony. David and Frank used to jam on this tune back in the sixties and this trio performance brought back a lot of memories.



Disc 2 / Track 8:

### SAY OLD MAN (Osborne)

### Bobby with Ronnie (quitar).

Bobby Osborne played this tune for David years ago (at the previously mentioned field recording session with Jesse) and has been perfecting it for a long time. More than any other player, Bobby has transferred the fiddle-note approach to mandolin playing, and this performance is a perfect example of how it's done.

Disc 2 / Track 12:

### **DUSTY MILLER** (Traditional)

Ensemble with Del.

Order of solos: Ricky, Sam, Ronnie, David, Buck, Jesse, Bobby, Frank.

Here's another traditional Bill Monroe fiddle epic that he recorded in 1966 with Richard Greene (fiddle), Peter Rowan (guitar), Lamar Grier (banjo) and son James Monroe (bass). This spirited rendition was the first piece played at the *Mandolin Extravaganza* jam session; not bad for eight mandolin pickers playing together for the first time!

Disc 2 / Track 13:

### CAJUN MANDOLIN (Owens/Rich)

### Jesse (center), Ronnie (left) and David (right) with Del.

Jesse adapted this arrangement, featuring both cross-picking and split-string techniques, from the tune "Cajun Fiddle," which was written and recorded by the late Don Rich, the talented fiddle player, tenor singer and right-hand (side) man with Buck Owens. It can be heard on Buck's LP *Roll Out the Red Carpet* (Capitol 2443).



Disc 2 / Track 14:

### **BOSTON BOY** (Traditional)

Ricky (left), David (center) and Ronnie (right) with Del.

"Oh he played an old tune called 'Soldier's Joy' and he played one called 'Boston Boy'..."

-from Bill Monroe's "Uncle Pen"

David learned this legendary fiddle tune from a tape Ralph Rinzler made of Bill Monroe playing many of his Uncle Pen's "secret" tunes on unaccompanied mandolin. As Ricky mentions in his spoken intro, he helped David record the tune (playing twin fiddle with Vassar Clements) on his first recording project, *The David Grisman Rounder Album*. It seems to work equally well with three mandolins.

Disc 2 / Track 9:

### WESTPHALIA WALTZ (Traditional)

### Jesse (left) and Bobby (right) with Del.

This traditional fiddle waltz, often performed by Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys, is rendered here in fine tremolo style by these two virtuosos who temporarily abandon their usual trademark approaches to achieve harmony on this old tune.

Disc 2 / Track 10:

### PLAY IT PRETTY, ME (Wakefield)

Frank with Del.

Frank Wakefield has always been on the outer fringes of Bill Monroe's mandolin style and this tune is a case in point. It sounds like the mandolin breaks from a hypothetical hardcore bluegrass song that we don't know the words to, but it also has a kind of archaic, primitive feel as well.



Disc 2 / Track 11: **MEXICAN STOMP** (Wakefield)

Frank (left), David (right) with Ronnie (guitar).

Frank Wakefield was an immense influence on David during his formative years in the sixties. They would spend hours together, with Frank generously showing David everything from fiddle tunes to Bill Monroe solos from records he had painstakingly transcribed (mentally). Now, after all these years, the two get to trade solos and harmonies on this original tune in (at least) two time signatures.

Disc 2 / Track 15:

# WHO AT MY DOOR IS STANDING? (A.B. Everett)

Jesse with Del.

Jesse again utilizes his remarkable "split-string" technique to render a beautiful arrangement of this old hymn, which he learned from an Eddy Arnold recording. His playing sounds like a cross between a pedal steel guitar and a balalaika. No bluegrass instrumentalist has ever used more difficult means to achieve the simplest, prettiest sounds.





Disc 2 / Track 16: **BLUE MOON** 

BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY (Monroe)

Ensemble with Del.

Sam.

This second arrangement of Bill Monroe's masterpiece brings us full circle from Bill Monroe to fiddle tunes, originals, waltzes, hymns, country standards and back to the master himself. David kicks this one off, and the very high solo is by Frank.

Disc 2 / Track 17:

### WORLD'S SHORTEST RAWHIDE (Mon)

Exactly what the title implies...just like these notes.

DISC 1		9. BLUE GRASS SPECIAL	3:25
2130 1		10. MISS IZZIE	2:17
1. BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY	1:22	11. CATNIP	2:30
2. OLD JOE CLARK	5:13	12. PANHANDLE COUNTRY	4:41
3. THE CAKEWALK	2:50	13. ONE-LEGGED MAN	1:43
4. WAYFARING STRANGER	6:16	14. EAST TENNESSEE BLUES	3:03
5. I'M GOING BACK TO OLD KENTUCKY	1:31	15. B NATURAL	2:33
6. MCCOURY BLUES	2:20	16. NO YOU STAND BACK	2:40
7. CHEROKEE LADY	3:39	17. I WONDER WHERE YOU ARE TONIGHT?	4:03
8. DOWN HOME WALTZ	3:24	Total time 5	53:44



# NOTES ON THE MUSICIANS

NEIL V. ROSENBERG



1937 Gibson F-5 ("Hoss")

# SAM BUSH

ORN IN 1952 IN BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY, Sam Bush grew up in a musical family. He got serious about playing when he was 11—first on mandolin and then on fiddle. That's what he was playing when I saw him at Bean Blossom in 1966, an intense young teenager making a guest appearance at a Bill Monroe show, introduced by Bill's fiddler Richard Greene as "Sammy Bush." At first he was better known for his fiddling than his mandolin playing. A fan of Texas-style fiddling, he won several national fiddle championships in the late sixties.

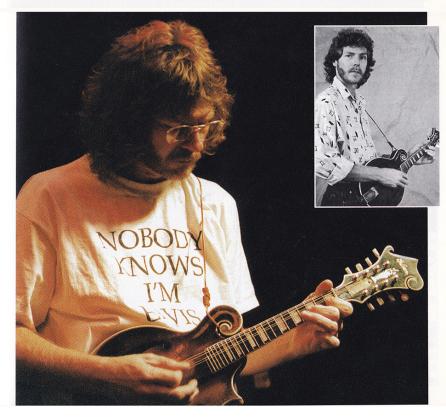
Sam first gained notice for his all-around performance skills in 1970 when he joined the Bluegrass Alliance, a Louisville band that released an album titled *Newgrass*, a name he became closely associated with during the next two decades. In 1972 Sam and several other members of that band left to form The New Grass Revival, a band with a look, an attitude and a sound that defined a new style, melding bluegrass and rock. The newgrass fusion included amplified instruments, rock repertoire, John Cowan's soulful vocals and innovative banjo work by Courtney Johnson and, later, Bela Fleck. At its center was Sam,

who, in addition to vocals and fiddle, contributed innovative mandolin work that even featured a few numbers played in Delta blues slide style. For a couple of years they worked with Leon Russell, bringing newgrass to rock audiences.

Sam became known as an adventurous mandolinist who plays with fierce drive and originality but who also listens closely to his bandmates and helps bring them up to his stratospheric level of musicianship. Much in demand as a Nashville studio session musician, he joined Emmylou Harris's Nash Ramblers in the late eighties. In recent years he's done several of his own projects for Rounder and Sugar Hill, toured with Lyle Lovett and continued to appear on the cream of bluegrass and country records playing his fiddle and mandolin. He currently leads his own band, the perfect vehicle for an innovative youth who's become one of the masters of bluegrass, newgrass and country mandolin and fiddle.



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DISC 2		9. WESTPHALIA WALTZ	1:38
2100 2	TELEVISION OF THE STREET	10. PLAY IT PRETTY, ME	3:15
1. ROANOKE	2:47	11. MEXICAN STOMP	3:02
2. CATTLE IN THE CANE	2:48	12. DUSTY MILLER	4:36
3. DIXIE HOEDOWN	5:42	13. CAJUN MANDOLIN	3:58
4. ASHOKAN FAREWELL	4:25	14. BOSTON BOY	3:03
5. CUMBERLAND GAP	2:40	15. WHO AT MY DOOR IS STANDING?	3:11
6. SASSYFRASS	2:24	16. BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY	3:35
7. GOLDEN SLIPPERS	2:34	17. WORLD'S SHORTEST RAWHIDE	0:07
8. SAY OLD MAN	3:21	Total time	57:12



# **DAVID GRISMAN**

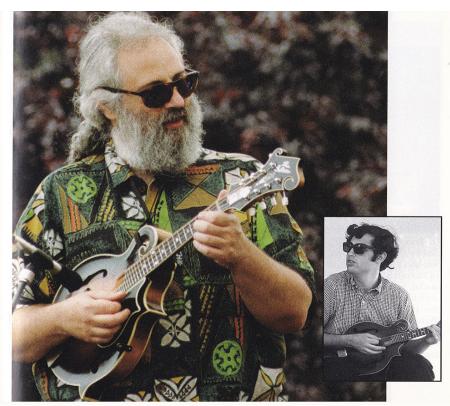
O-PRODUCER OF THIS ALBUM, David Grisman is best known for the genre that carries his nickname—"dawg" music, a blend of bluegrass, classical, jazz, Gypsy and Latin influences performed by his ensemble, the David Grisman Quintet, which puts the mandolin at the center.

Born in 1945 in New Jersey, David was inspired to learn the mandolin in 1961 when Ralph Rinzler took him to hear a bluegrass show that featured both Bill Monroe and Frank Wakefield. An early student of Wakefield's, David began his career as a bluegrass musician with the New York Ramblers and as a producer with Red Allen and Frank Wakefield's Folkways album. Subsequently he honed his bluegrass chops in Allen's band.

David took a turn away from bluegrass in 1967 when he and Peter Rowan formed Earth Opera. There, these two bluegrass expatriates experimented at playing rock; David used both the mandolin and mandocello. By the early

seventies he was performing bluegrass in Bay Area clubs and doing studio work where he broke new ground in introducing the mandolin into the musical texture of modern popular music. He can be heard on such classics from that era as James Taylor's "Gorilla," Bonnie Raitt's "Home" and the Grateful Dead's "Friend of the Devil." His work with Muleskinner (1972) and Old and In the Way (1973) brought him back into bluegrass and helped establish his reputation as a leader of the new generation. Somewhere in there he even found time to give Bob Dylan mandolin lessons!

But it was his Quintet that made his name synonymous with the mandolin for many listeners who'd never heard of it before. Rave reviews for the first album launched his music into the major-label sphere, and in the late seventies and early eighties his sound and career took off. There were movie soundtracks, national TV appearances, guest performances and recordings with jazz greats like Stephane Grappelli and Svend Asmussen. The quintet became a launching pad for the careers of Tony Rice, Darol Anger, Mike Marshall, Mark O'Connor and others. David has made his mark on the music world as musician, bandleader, historian, teacher and record producer.





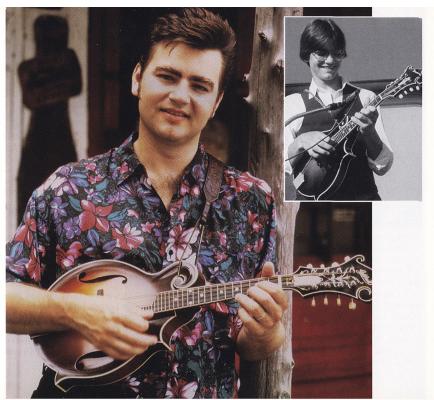
1981 Gilchrist Model 5

## RONNIE MCCOURY

ONNIE MCCOURY, THE INSTIGATOR OF THIS PROJECT, recently told an interviewer: "I had this idea to make a record for some young guy who comes along and says, 'I'd like to learn what bluegrass mandolin is.' Here's one CD that can tell you."

Six-time winner of the International Bluegrass Music Association's Mandolinist of the Year award, Ronnie has been a member of his father Del McCoury's band since 1981, when he was 14. I first saw him performing in 1986 in Floyd, Virginia; by then he was not only laying down some very solid rhythm and taking breaks reminiscent of Bill Monroe, he'd started to sing with a voice that matched his father's award-winning high lonesome sound.

Ronnie grew up totally immersed in bluegrass; his early mandolin influences included Monroe, Bobby Osborne and Frank Wakefield. But his musical interests and influences didn't end there: he was also a fan of the Grateful Dead, David Grisman's dawg music and Sam Bush's newgrass. Like all of the other pickers on this project, he's explored other forms both on stage and in the recording studio. In recent years he's worked not only on his father's recordings but on a Rounder project with his brother, banjoist Robbie, and has appeared as a guest on many other albums. He played on the 1997 \*GrooveGrass Boyz\*\* CD, which mixed three great singer-guitarists (Mac Wiseman, Doc Watson and Del McCoury) with a sound that combined bluegrass instrumentation and songs with a heavy drum-machine rhythm section and other decidedly non-bluegrass sound effects, and recently co-produced a bluegrass album with Steve Earle. Ronnie McCoury has emerged as a charismatic leader in the younger bluegrass generation and has been called the "young Elvis of bluegrass music."





# **JESSE MCREYNOLDS**

ESSE MCREYNOLDS WAS BORN IN 1929 near Coeburn in the mountains of western Virginia, where he grew up in a musical community. His father played banjo and fiddle and his grandfather was a famous local fiddler who recorded at the legendary Bristol sessions in 1927. He and brother Jim were singing and playing music together in public by the time they were in their teens, and began their career as "Jesse and James" on a Norton, Virginia radio station in 1947. Around this time Jesse first heard three-finger style bluegrass banjo picking and decided to re-create that sound on the mandolin, using a flat pick instead of banjoists' fingerpicks. The result was his unique "cross-picking" sound, first heard on a series of gospel singles he and Jim did with Larry Roll as the Virginia Trio for a small Ohio company in the early

fifties. Jesse's mandolin picking and lead vocals eventually graced recordings by Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys on Capitol and Starday in the fifties, on Columbia, Epic and Capitol in the sixties and seventies, and on Old Dominion, Rounder, CMH and other labels since then. Jim and Jesse have been members of the Grand Ole Opry since 1964. They had a big country hit at the height of the popularity of truck-driving songs in 1967 with "Diesel on My Tail."

In 1969 Jesse became the only mandolinist to record with The Doors, and in 1982 Jim and Jesse recorded a trio album with Charlie Louvin of the great country duo the Louvin Brothers, their close friends. In 1993 they were inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Association's Hall of Honor; in 1997 they were awarded an NEA Arts National Heritage Fellowship, which was presented to them by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton at the White House. Among Jesse's recent projects are a series of recordings with The Masters, a band that includes bluegrass pioneers Josh Graves, Eddie Adcock and Kenny Baker, and albums featuring his guitar and fiddle work.





1924 Gibson Loar & 1925 Gibson "Fern" F-5

# **BOBBY OSBORNE**

T. PATRICK'S DAY, 1967: the Osborne Brothers are between sets at the Outpost Bar in Columbus, Ohio, and Bobby and I are talking about mandolin playing. He says he enjoys playing fiddle tunes on the mandolin, and particularly likes Howdy Forrester's Texas-influenced style. Talking of favorite tunes, I mention that I like "Paddy on the Turnpike," especially when Monroe plays it—"like an old-time fiddle tune should be played." Bobby gives me a serious look and says there are notes in that tune that Monroe doesn't play. Our talk turns to other

tunes; then it's time for the next set. Bobby opens it up with a "Paddy . . ." like I'd never heard before, with all of those missing notes and more. It's Texas fiddle, it's Hank Garland guitar; most of all, it's Bobby Osborne-style mandolin.

Born in Hyden, Kentucky, in 1931, Bobby Osborne came to Dayton, Ohio with his family during World War II. He began playing country music as a teenager. Hearing Flatt and Scruggs with Bill Monroe led him into their kind of country music, what would later be called bluegrass. In 1949 he joined the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers, with whom he made his first recordings; brief stints with the Stanley Brothers and others came before his Marine Corps service in Korea. In 1954 he teamed up with his younger brother Sonny, and the Osborne Brothers have been together ever since, joining the Grand Ole Opry in 1965.

Bobby made his reputation as a singer—his high pure tenor lead is the focus of a trio sound that has never been surpassed in bluegrass, and his award-winning performances on songs like "Ruby" and "Rocky Top" have set the standard for bluegrass singing. Little wonder that his intricate and bluesy mandolin playing sometimes gets overlooked, but over the years his breaks have been closely studied by aspiring mandolinists. The Osborne mandolin style has directly or indirectly influenced contemporary bluegrass mandolin playing more than anyone else's. Bobby, always modest, has said: "Jesse McReynolds is—without a doubt—my favorite mandolin player." Bobby Osborne is mine.



1923 Gibson Loar F-5, dated July 9

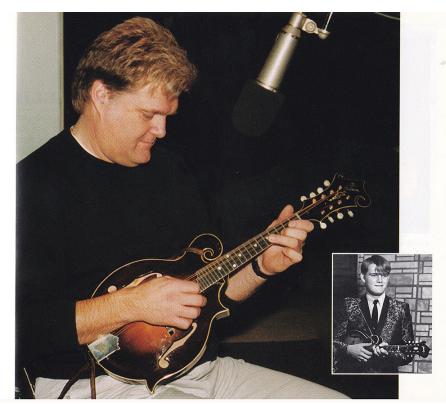
# RICKY SKAGGS

ORN IN 1954 IN LAWRENCE COUNTY, KENTUCKY, Ricky Skaggs grew up immersed in old-time, country, gospel and bluegrass music, singing with his parents from the age of three. His dad gave him his first mandolin at five; at seven his guest appearance on Flatt and Scruggs's syndicated television show was seen all over the Southeast. A great admirer of the Stanley Brothers, he joined with another teenage fan of theirs, Keith Whitley, to sing the old Stanley duets in strikingly faithful re-creations of the originals. In 1969 Ralph Stanley heard them and invited them to join his band. Ricky stayed with Ralph until 1972, playing mandolin and singing on some of Stanley's most memorable recordings.

During the seventies Skaggs had a remarkable career playing in the most influential bands in bluegrass, including the Country Gentlemen and J.D. Crowe and the New South. In 1977 he launched his own band, Boone Creek,

and was building a formidable career as a bluegrass bandleader when Emmylou Harris invited him to join her Hot Band. It was the start of a meteoric rise in country music.

With Harris's support he made a successful Sugar Hill solo album that mixed country and bluegrass, which led to a contract with Epic Records. In the early eighties he became a top country music star and played a crucial role in launching and sustaining the "New Traditionalist" movement. He became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 1982. Always proud of his bluegrass connections, Skaggs continued to include his mandolin and fiddle in his country shows and recordings, and had chart-tracking hits with such bluegrass standards as "Wheel Hoss" and "Uncle Pen." In the eighties he formed a close friendship with Bill Monroe, and that inspired his 1997 return to straight-ahead bluegrass, fronting his band Kentucky Thunder and playing the mandolin. In 1998 his *Bluegrass Rules!* was voted Album of the Year by the International Bluegrass Music Association, who also voted his band Instrumental Group of the Year; the following year, they garnered the Grammy for Best Bluegrass Recording.





1923 Gibson Loar F-5, dated February 8

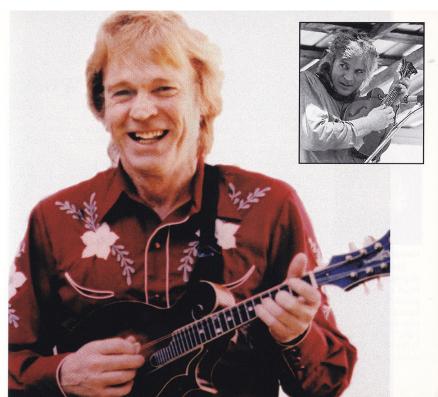
# FRANK WAKEFIELD

at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. The headliner was Sid Campbell, kingpin of the Columbus bluegrass scene. The long drive from Indiana was made more attractive for us because we'd get to see Frank Wakefield, a legendary mandolin player then working in Sid's band. We knew about Frank because of one recording, a 1957 single on Wayside, a tiny Detroit label, of his instrumental "New Camptown Races." The record was out of print, but no bluegrass tape collection was complete without a scratchy dub of that gem, a wild ride in B flat that seemed to out-Monroe Bill's wildest stuff.

What we didn't know about Frank was the way in which his wildness extended far beyond the mandolin. One memorable moment in that concert

came when dobro player Danny Milhon stepped up to the micraphone for a solo and, while Danny did his thing, Frank knelt down beside him and rolled one of Danny's pants legs halfway up his calf. Distractions like this tended to draw one's attention from Frank's amazing mandolin playing, but by the end of the show we understood his reputation as a great musician.

Born in Emory Gap, Tennessee in 1935, Frank came up in the same rough-and-tumble Dayton bluegrass scene that nurtured the Osborne Brothers and Red Allen. He made a number of fine straight-ahead bluegrass recordings with Red in the early sixties, including a Starday session with Don Reno and Chubby Wise as sidemen, a Folkways album produced by a young David Grisman, and cuts with banjo-picker Bill Emerson that were released on 99-cent "drugstore labels." Since the seventies he's made a number of solo albums that have given him more room to stretch out with his own "classical" pieces and other experiments that show (as do his performances on this set) that he's the test pilot of bluegrass mandolin, always pushing the edge of the envelope.



1982 Ellis



# **BUCK WHITE**

FIRST HEARD BUCK WHITE at Carlton Haney's second Roanoke Bluegrass Festival in Fincastle, Virginia in 1966. He was leading a band called the Downhomers, the band that had traveled the farthest to appear at the festival. Coming from Fort Smith, Arkansas, they were the only group from west of the Mississippi.

The following year they came to Bill Monroe's first Bean Blossom festival; I was running the band contest that year and they placed a close second. Buck's young daughters Cheryl and Sharon were in the band, now called the Down Home Folks, and everyone loved their singing. In 1971 they moved to Nashville and began working at music full time. During the following years they emerged from the bluegrass circuit, establishing a reputation as a leading country act. They toured with Emmylou Harris in 1979. A string of acclaimed albums on Sugar Hill, Warner/Curb and MCA made them more widely

known to country audiences, and in 1984 they became members of the Grand Ole Opry.

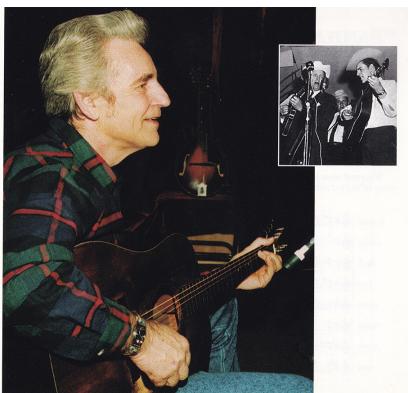
The Whites' music still carries the nuances conveyed by their original name of "Downhomers"—singing and picking that is down-to-earth and reminiscent of music at a house party or family reunion. In an act best known for its vocals, Buck's instrumental artistry on the piano and the mandolin have gradually caught the ears of fans. Insiders have long known of his prowess, and he's guested on many recordings. If you can find a copy of his solo album *More Pretty Girls Than One*, take a listen to his tasty twin mandolin harmonies with David Grisman on "Winter Winds." Buck comes from Wichita Falls, Texas—not typical bluegrass territory—and he grew up listening to and playing Western swing in the fifties. Somewhere along the line he heard Bill Monroe and got hooked on bluegrass, and we're the richer for it.



# **DEL MCCOURY**

LAYING RHYTHM GUITAR on most of the tracks on this set is Del McCoury, Ronnie's father and leader of the band that has won more International Bluegrass Music Association trophies—23—than any other.

I first met Del, a North Carolina native who grew up in Pennsylvania, in 1963 when I was managing Bill Monroe's Brown County Jamboree in Bean Blossom, Indiana. At the time Del had been with Bill's Blue Grass Boys for several months, and that was how long he'd been playing guitar and singing lead. When he arrived in Nashville early in 1963 to join Bill on banjo, he discovered that another banjoist, Bill Keith, had arrived at the same time for the same job! Monroe asked Del to try out as guitarist and lead singer, and the rest, as they say, is history. Del's year with the Blue Grass Boys was a challenging start for a singer-guitarist; he's been recognized as one of the best in the music ever since. In the early seventies Del's album High on a Mountain introduced the sound of his band to bluegrass fans, and since then his remarkable high lonesome lead singing and his solid and stylish rhythm guitar, with that trademark flatted seventh in the Lester Flatt G-run, has become the standard of excellence in the world of bluegrass.



# "PANHANDLE COUNTRY"

TRANSCRIBED BY JOHN MCGANN

HESE FIRST EIGHT BARS OF NOTATION show each player's unique note choices, using the melody of the tune as an improvisational springboard. Ronnie leads off with a hint of the blues in his line, echoed strongly by Dawg's bent notes. Buck's first four bars are strongly based on the melody, followed by an improvised line; Jesse is also bluesy in his approach. Bobby draws on his "fiddle-style" melodic sense as Frank works an almost classical-sounding double stop in bar two, and Ricky's bouncy feel contrasts with Sam's driving rhythmic phrasing.

What notation cannot reveal is the sound of each player—that essential combination of right hand attack and pick choice, left hand touch and synchronization, and the choice of instrument. As you follow the score, listen for the tone, attack and rhythmic feel that distinguishes each player.

It's a real treat to hear these great players together in a relaxed jam session—a rare gathering of some of the greatest living mandolinists.



