



L-R Terry Baucom, Doyle Lawson, Tony Rice & J.D. Crowe

A Bluegrass Spectacular

by Arthur Menius

Photos by Brant Gamma

A special spirit characterized the best music of Flatt and Scruggs. Between 1948 and 1955 they took the form they had learned with Bill Monroe, made it smoother, more relaxed, and became the most popular and imitated band in bluegrass. Dropping Monroe's strident, high pitched vocal approach, Flatt and Scruggs exhibited a certain feeling and touch which, more than any hot licks, defined what we now call classic bluegrass.

They achieved such virtuosity and matchless timing that even fast paced numbers such as "Flint Hill Special" and "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" seemed graceful and easy in their hands. While Monroe spawned bluegrass star after bluegrass star, Flatt and Scruggs inspired a generation of pickers who would achieve prominence during the sixties and seventies. Banjo master J.D. Crowe,

for example, traces his decision to become a musician to seeing Flatt and Scruggs play in Lexington, Kentucky around 1950, when Crowe was but thirteen.

Artists like Crowe, Tony Rice, Doyle Lawson, Charlie Waller, and Sam Bush have taken bluegrass far from the elegant precision of the early Flatt and Scruggs sound. They have opened avenues that have made it as diverse as any major musical genre. They remember, however, the beautiful artistry that first attracted them to music.

In September 1980 guitarist Tony Rice assembled four other exceptional second generation pickers to pay homage to their musical heritage. Rice, Lawson, Crowe, Todd Phillips, and Bobby Hicks recorded "The Bluegrass Album" (Rounder 0140). Bluegrass fans and critics received their offering so

ecstatically that the five reassembled to produce "The Bluegrass Album: Volume Two" (Rounder 0164), which appeared in 1982. They have since recorded a third volume. The formula is unimpeachable: the finest musicians of the eighties recording the best music of the fifties. The execution is flawless.

But bluegrass fans have had a serious, legitimate complaint. The band has not performed live, except for 1982 appearances in Denton, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

This autumn "A Bluegrass Spectacular" will not only correct that problem, but, hopes promoter Milton Harkey, give this beautiful American music the recognition it has deserved for over thirty years. From Thanksgiving Day in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina through December fourth in Boston, Rice, Lawson, Crowe, Phillips, and exciting fiddler Terry Baucom will enthrall audiences at major indoor venues with their mastery of classic traditional bluegrass. A few of the performances will also include fiddler Bobby Hicks and Jerry Douglas, whose Dobro playing is featured on the soon-to-be released "Volume 3."

"It's a chance," says mandolinist Lawson, "to get together and do the old stuff that we love and have played all our lives. We'll show that we haven't forgotten it." Their memories are

BLUEGRASS UNLIMITED

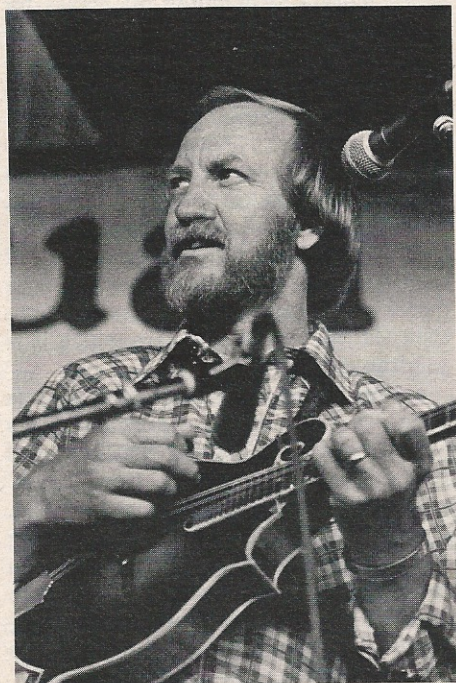
photographic. The five are so well versed that they mix together as a unit with no single artist taking precedence over the others. The limitations of the classic style actually seem to open up new levels of instrumental brilliance for the artists. The format forces them to find precise outlets for self-expression. In so doing the band re-energizes their timeless selections.

Despite their instrumental mastery, their vocal work steals the show. Tenor Lawson and baritone Crowe bracket Rice's lead singing into the kind of trio that bluegrass dreams are made of. Rice's rich, mature voice perfectly fits the relaxed Lester Flatt style.

"Their understanding of the music surpasses any other five people," states Harkey. "They'll come to Asheville, practice just two days, and be the best bluegrass band in the world."

Bold words, but both volumes of "The Bluegrass Album" back them up, as do the individual accomplishments of the members of "A Bluegrass Spectacular." Many devotees consider Crowe the greatest contemporary master of the five-string banjo. While still a teenager he played some exceptional licks on several of Jimmy Martin's biggest hits, before founding his own outfit, the Kentucky Mountain Boys. That group evolved by the mid-seventies into The New South, a vital center for bluegrass innovation. Tony Rice played guitar in the most famous lineup of The New South (featuring Ricky Skaggs). He subsequently joined David Grisman before exploring his own jazz oriented path with the Tony Rice Unit. Todd Phillips picked the mandolin behind Grisman, before mastering

Doyle Lawson



the bass and joining the Tony Rice Unit. Doyle Lawson also began his professional career with Jimmy Martin then became a Kentucky Mountain Boy. A seven and a half year stint with the legendary Country Gentlemen established him as one of the most creative and solid mandolinists in the business. He now fronts Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, which is rapidly becoming one of the most popular bluegrass outfits. As a member of Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver, Terry Baucom has established himself as one of the best young fiddlers in bluegrass despite playing banjo most of the time.

GOLDEN GATE
Deluxe **GUITAR CAPO**



See your dealer, or write:
Golden Gate Musical Instruments
P.O. Box 2841
So. San Francisco, CA 94080

\$3.95
Suggested
Retail

**Can't Learn From
Tablature?
You are not alone!**

The Murphy Method

*learn
Scruggs-style
banjo by ear*

THE MURPHY METHOD is for you. Learn Scruggs-style banjo by ear, the easy way — note by note without tab. Cripple Creek, Cumberland Gap, Foggy Mountain Breakdown, John Hardy, and more! Introductory Tape with "Banjo in the Hollow" just \$6.00.

For information write:
The Murphy Method
P.O. Box 1215 BU
Hawthorne, Fl. 32640



You're invited to attend
A Bluegrass Spectacular featuring

"The Bluegrass Album Band"

J.D. Crowe, Doyle Lawson, Tony Rice

Et Al

Thurs., Nov. 24 - Myrtle Beach, SC - Norman Adams - 404-864-7203
Fri., Nov. 25 - Asheville, NC - Pick 'n Grin - 704-253-8493
Sat., Nov. 26 - Greensboro, NC - Milton Harkey - 704-274-5547
Sun., Nov. 27 - Roanoke, VA - Freeman Sharpe - 803-754-2199
Mon., Nov. 28 - Elizabethton, TN - Clayton Slagle - 615-542-8615
Tues., Nov. 29 - Lancaster, OH - Rachel Powell - 614-654-6424
Wed., Nov. 30 - Norman, OK - Greg Davis - 817-481-5656
Thurs., Dec. 1 - Ft. Worth, TX - Greg Davis - 817-481-5656
Fri., Dec. 2 - New York, NY - Doug Tuchman - 212-687-9000
Sat., Dec. 3 - Washington, DC - Ken Gallahan - 703-549-6065
Sun., Dec. 4 - Boston, MA - Nancy Talbott - 617-492-0415

For further information contact:
Milton Harkey - Tour Mgr.
25 Braddock Way
Asheville, NC 28803
704-274-5547

**A
BLUEGRASS
SPECTACULAR**
November 29, 1983
at Charlie Horse Palace
Largest Club in the Midwest!
Memorial Drive (Rt. 33) Lancaster, Ohio

THE BLUEGRASS ALBUM BAND
J.D. Crowe, Doyle Lawson, Tony Rice
Terry Baucom and Todd Phillips

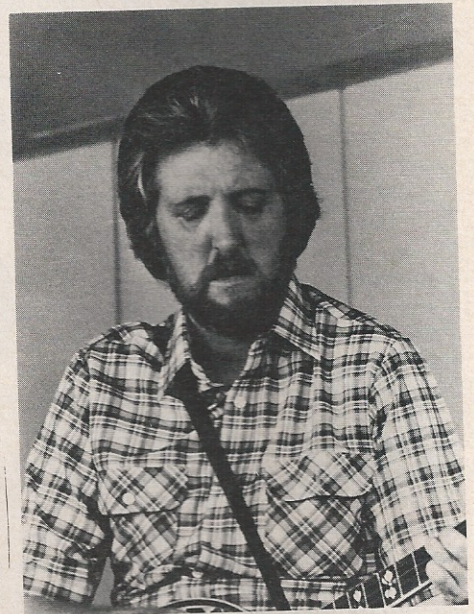
ALSO
**THE BLANCHARD VALLEY
BLUEGRASS BOYS**
Winners of the 1983 KFC Best New
Bluegrass Band Competition
Louisville, Kentucky

Tickets - \$10.00 Advance, \$12.00 at door
Advance tickets available at all CTO &
Ticketron outlets or by mail. Send S.A.S.E.
to: **BLUEGRASS SPECTACULAR**
P.O. Box 430
Thornville, OH 43076

Doors open 6 p.m.
Free Parking

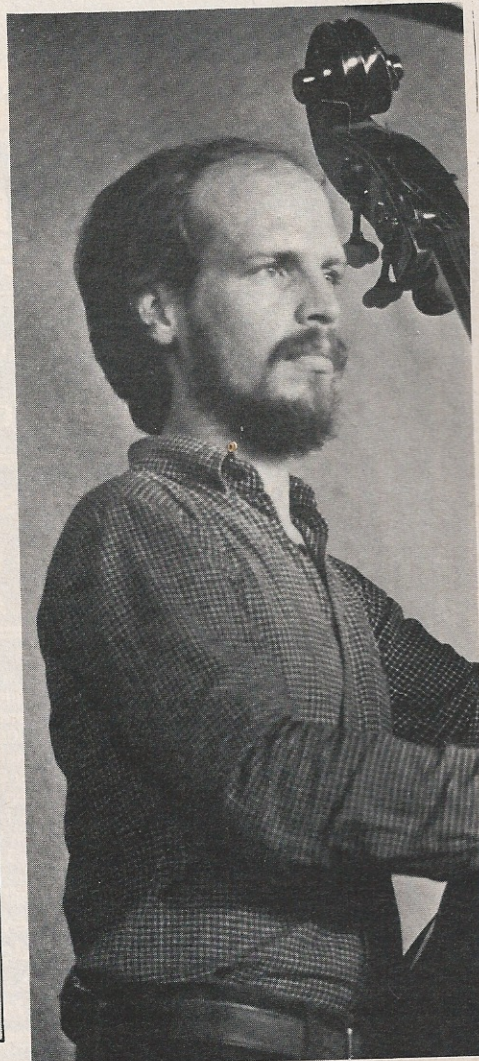


Tony Rice



J.D. Crowe

Todd Phillips



**Respected
the world over.**



Banjo, mandolin, and fiddle
components, accessories, and
kits, in one catalog, from one
source. For your free copy call:
800-848-2273 Toll-free
(614-592-3021 in Ohio)
or write:

STEWART-MACDONALD
BOX 900C, ATHENS, OHIO 45701

The majesty of their team work almost transcends any individual accomplishment. These men obviously possess too much talent even to consider slavishly imitating the classic recordings. Nor do they use the traditional tunes merely as jumping off points for solo instrumental breaks. Rather they apply their awesome virtuosity to recapturing the unsurpassed spirit, wonderful feeling, and memorable timing of Flatt and Scruggs' finest hours in the early fifties. Although they have brought much change to bluegrass individually, together as "A Bluegrass Spectacular" they evoke a powerful sense of timelessness. As a band they personify a music much more intricate and precise than the country sound with which it is so often confused.

One of the group's biggest fans is none other than Jody Rainwater, who played bass for Flatt and Scruggs until 1953. "To me 'A Bluegrass Spectacular' is one of the greatest things in the world. It shows that bluegrass is really catching on. I appreciate some one believing in them and the music enough to put on a tour. I'll be in Myrtle Beach for opening night." Listen to him. The man knows what great bluegrass is all about.

BLUEGRASS UNLIMITED