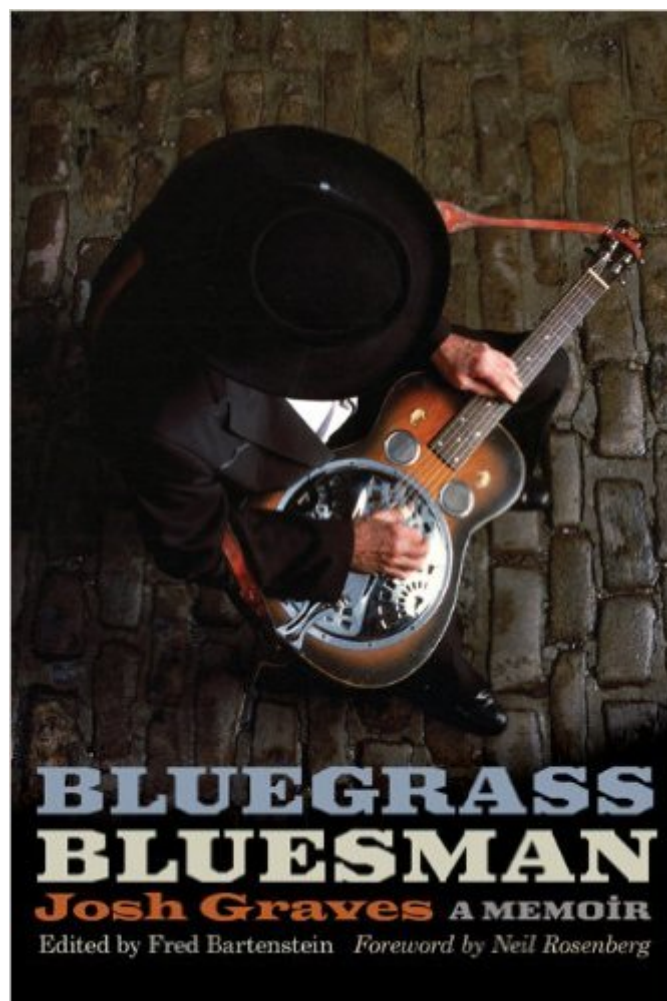


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Bluegrass Bluesman: A Memoir (Music In American Life)



Synopsis

A pivotal member of the hugely successful bluegrass band Flatt and Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys, Dobro pioneer Josh Graves (1927-2006) was a living link between bluegrass music and the blues. In *Bluegrass Bluesman*, this influential performer shares the story of his lifelong career in music. In lively anecdotes, Graves describes his upbringing in East Tennessee and the climate in which bluegrass music emerged during the 1940s. Deeply influenced by the blues, he adapted Earl Scruggs's revolutionary banjo style to the Dobro resonator slide guitar and gave the Foggy Mountain Boys their distinctive sound. Graves' accounts of daily life on the road through the 1950s and 1960s reveal the band's dedication to musical excellence, Scruggs' leadership, and an often grueling life on the road. He also comments on his later career when he played in Lester Flatt's Nashville Grass and the Earl Scruggs Revue and collaborated with the likes of Boz Scaggs, Charlie McCoy, Kenny Baker, Eddie Adcock, Jesse McReynolds, Marty Stuart, Jerry Douglas, Alison Krauss, and his three musical sons. A colorful storyteller, Graves brings to life the world of an American troubadour and the mountain culture that he never left behind. Born in Tellico Plains, Tennessee, Josh Graves (1927-2006) is universally acknowledged as the father of the bluegrass Dobro. In 1997 he was inducted into the Bluegrass Hall of Fame.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a general rule, I can't say I care for memoirs. They are the least dependable of all historical

writings in terms of chronology and objectivity--and yet, they're often vitally important historical records if for no other reason simply as the representation of an individual's own "take" on what he or she experienced. And with the help of some friends, tape recorders, and editors, "Uncle Josh" Graves created a gem of a memoir. I could wish perhaps that the legendary dobroist's interviewers had prompted him more about specifics in an effort to get him to explain himself further and more clearly at various points, but as it is, this book is perhaps the best "insider's" history of Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and the Foggy Mountain Boys that we are likely to see. For what it's worth, the aspects of the narrative that touched me the most personally were Graves' recollections of how incredibly petty and tightfisted that both Lester Flatt and Bill Monroe could be (he characterizes Earl Scruggs, heartwarmingly, as a fairer, and scrupulously honest, man). Uncle Josh even recalled a time, after Lester Flatt had fired him for getting too much studio work in addition to his band duties, that he had to threaten Flatt with a lawsuit for telling an audience that he (Graves) had died. (And karma proved to be a lulu, too; though Graves does not mention this particular followup incident, Flatt had to make exactly the same threat to Esquire Magazine, for referring to him in a 1974 article as "the late Lester Flatt.") But there is perhaps something to be said for Monroe's and Flatt's quirks: their bitternesses, pettinesses, and miserliness actually, I think, reveal their rural roots all the more. Raised up from "the hardest" to a position of fame and importance...

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