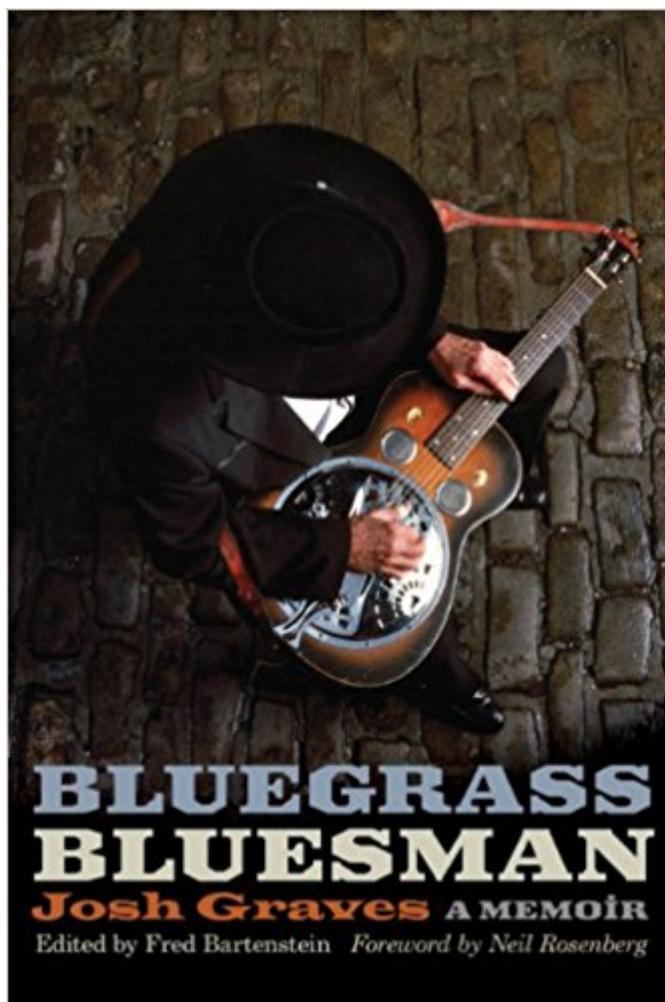


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Bluegrass Bluesman: A Memoir (Music In American Life)



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

Series: Music in American Life

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: University of Illinois Press; 1st Edition edition (September 20, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0252078640

ISBN-13: 978-0252078644

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 22 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,454,696 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #18 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Bluegrass #684 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Country & Folk #804 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Country

Customer Reviews

"Mesmerizing . . . especially for lovers of bluegrass."--Booklist"One comes away from this

interesting read with a keen understanding of a man who influenced country music, dobro playing in particular, in a way few have.Â Recommended."--Choice"A fascinating look at the musical culture of the South. . . . Thoroughly Southern, spicy, real, and lots of fun."--Library Journal"The legendary musician provides interesting insight into the ways of his long-time boss, Earl Scruggs."--MountainTimes.com"Graves's name won't ring a bell for many outside musicians' circles, but Burkett "Uncle Josh" Graves helped take bluegrass from southern Appalachia to college campuses and beyond, to the world-music status it enjoys today. . . . Bluegrass Bluesman is unfiltered, off-the-cuff oral history."--The Wall Street Journal"In this welcome memoir, Graves proves himself a born storyteller. . . .Â Rarely is a guitarist's memoir such a rich read."--Vintage Guitar

Â Fred Bartenstein has performed many roles in bluegrass music, including magazine editor, broadcaster, musician, festival MC, talent director, scholar and consultant. He lives in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

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...strangely enough, back in the days when I was a preacher I saw more older ministers with exactly this same mindset, than I even

care to remember, and it was as much a part of them as breathing. Uncle Josh Graves left behind a fine memoir, and it evoked for me some bittersweet memories.

This narrative, distilled from interviews and tapes is entertaining and also captures the beginning of modern blue grass as it emerged from the traditional tunes from the mountains. If you are a fan then this gem is full of quips and stories from Josh Graves who crossed paths with every major performer of this day including Lightning Hopkins. I really enjoyed it for the information and for the style.

LOVE FLATT AND SCRUGGS? HERE'S THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO SET THEM APART IN THE BLUEGRASS WORLD.NO DOBRO IN BLUEGRASS UNTIL JOSH GRAVES WROTE THE BOOK.

The book was pieced together and after his death and it shows. If you are interested in the whole Flatt and Scruggs dynamic, it's worth the time but that's only a chapter or two if I recall correctly. This review seems a little harsh, but there are more notes and definitions then there are intriguing stories. Still worth it to hardcore fans....super quick and easy read.

I don't know the material the author had to work with but I totally enjoyed the book. I also appreciated the almost absence of profanity. Bluegrass is a family music.Russell Elkins

My husband liked it alot.....

Josh Graves is a great story teller. There are plenty of funny stories about life on the road as well as some history of the Dobro and it's place in Bluegrass music.

This is an interesting and informative book at many levels -- Josh's own words, the history of the times, the words spoken of Josh by others. I would give it a very high rating.

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