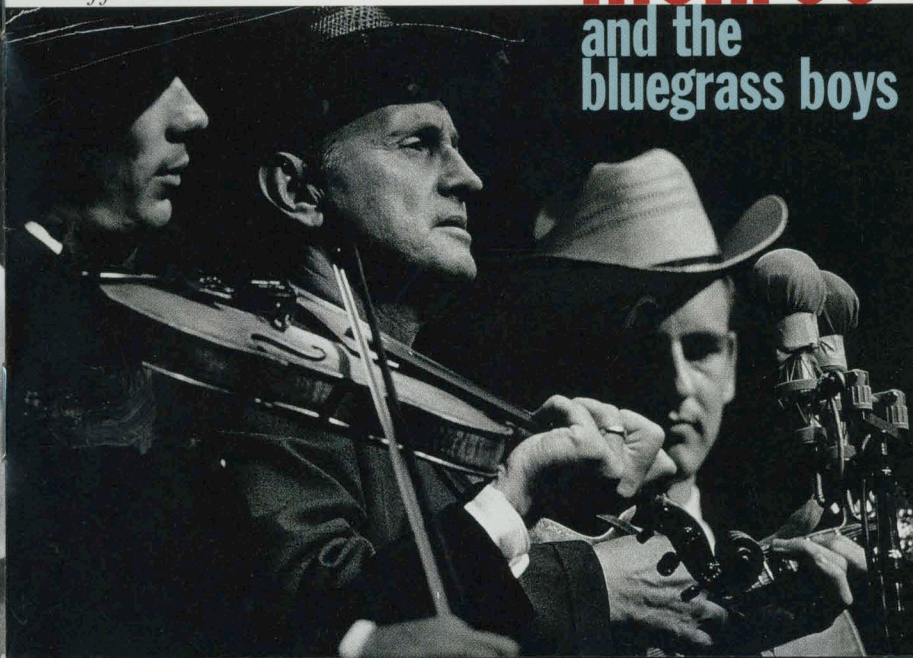




Smithsonian  
Folkways

*live recordings 1956-1969*  
*off the record volume 1*

**bill  
monroe**  
and the  
bluegrass boys

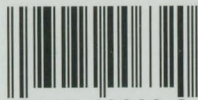


**Smithsonian  
Folkways**

Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings  
Center for Folklife Programs  
and Cultural Studies  
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington DC 20560

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**bill monroe and the bluegrass boys**  
**live recordings 1956–1969**  
**off the record volume 1**



0 9307-40063-2 0

- 1 *Watermelon Hanging on the Vine* 0:37
- 2 *Roanoke* 1:19
- 3 *Brakeman's Blues* 2:40
- 4 *Close By* 2:26
- 5 *Kentucky Waltz* 2:26
- 6 *Blue Grass Stomp* 2:10
- 7 *Blue Moon of Kentucky* 2:00
- 8 *I'm Working on a Building* 1:59
- 9 *Angels Rock Me to Sleep* 1:53
- 10 *Wheel Hoss* 2:08
- 11 *Watermelon Hanging on the Vine* 0:31
- 12 *Katy Hill* 3:06
- 13 *True Life Blues* 2:40
- 14 *I Live in the Past* 2:41
- 15 *Wayfaring Stranger* 4:27
- 16 *Fire on the Mountain* 3:37
- 17 *Blue Grass Breakdown* 3:22
- 18 *Raw Hide* 2:52
- 19 *Y'all Come* 0:49
- 20 *Cotton-Eyed Joe* 2:49
- 21 *Get Up John* 3:14
- 22 *White House Blues* 2:01
- 23 *Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms* 2:27
- 24 *Kansas City Railroad Blues* 2:51
- 25 *The Walls of Time* 4:30
- 26 *When He Reached Down His Hand For Me* 2:44
- 27 *Monroe Family Segment* 9:45

These previously unreleased recordings from the 1950s and '60s present Bill Monroe as many have never heard him: at live performances, jam sessions, and festival workshops with the Bluegrass Boys and brothers Charlie and Birch. This 75 minute collection captures Monroe with fellow musicians Peter Rowan, Bill Keith, Tex Logan, Bobby Hicks, Del McCoury, and many, many others. It includes rare photos as well as extensive notes by Ralph Rinzler.

*This is a companion to: Bill Monroe and Doc Watson, Live Duet Recordings 1963-1980, Off the Record Volume 2.*



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## bill monroe and the bluegrass boys

- 1 *Watermelon Hanging on the Vine* 0:37 (Traditional)
- 2 *Roanoke* 1:19 (B. Monroe/Uni Chappell, BMI)
- 3 *Brakeman's Blues* 2:40 (J. Rodgers/APRS, BMI)
- 4 *Close By* 2:26 (B. Monroe-Van Winkle/Cedarwood, BMI)
- 5 *Kentucky Waltz* 2:26 (B. Monroe/APRS, BMI)
- 6 *Blue Grass Stomp* 2:10 (B. Monroe/ Uni Chappell, BMI)
- 7 *Blue Moon of Kentucky* 2:00 (B.Monroe/ APRS, BMI)
- 8 *I'm Working on a Building* 1:59 (A. P. Carter/ APRS, BMI)
- 9 *Angels Rock Me to Sleep* 1:53 (Traditional)
- 10 *Wheel Hoss* 2:08 (B. Monroe/Uni Chappell, BMI)
- 11 *Watermelon Hanging on the Vine* 0:31 (Traditional)
- 12 *Katy Hill* 3:06 (B. Monroe/Uni Chappell, BMI)
- 13 *True Life Blues* 2:40 (B.Monroe/APRS, BMI)
- 14 *I Live in the Past* 2:41 (V.Stauffer/ Regent Music, BMI)
- 15 *Wayfaring Stranger* 4:27 (Traditional)

live recordings 1956–1969 off the record volume 1  
compiled and annotated by Ralph Rinzler

- 16 *Fire on the Mountain* 3:37 (Traditional)
- 17 *Blue Grass Breakdown* 3:22 (B.Monroe/Uni Chappell, BMI)
- 18 *Raw Hide* 2:52 (B. Monroe/Uni Chappell, BMI)
- 19 *Y'all Come* 0:49 (A. Duff/Fort Knox-Trio Music, BMI)
- 20 *Cotton-Eyed Joe* 2:49 (Traditional)
- 21 *Get Up John* 3:14 (B. Monroe/Uni Chappell, BMI)
- 22 *White House Blues* 2:01 (Traditional)
- 23 *Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms* 2:27 (C. Monroe/ Berwick Music, BMI)
- 24 *Kansas City Railroad Blues* 2:51 (G. Walburn- E. Hethcox)
- 25 *The Walls of Time* 4:30 (B. Monroe-P. Rowan/ Bill Monroe Music, BMI)
- 26 *When He Reached Down His Hand For Me* 2:44 (Traditional)
- 27 *Monroe Family Segment* 9:45

## Bill Monroe Off the Record: Live Recordings

With the advent of the CD, the complete studio-recorded repertoire of Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys, with excellent documentation, promises to reach new generations of listeners. *Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys, Live Recordings 1956–1969 Off the Record Volume 1* (SF 40063) is an attempt to present Bill as most of his fans will never have heard him. This collection was compiled from live performances in the nineteen-fifties and sixties; at barbecues and an all-night picking party arranged in his honor by Tex and Peggy Logan in their home; and in conversation and performance with his brothers Birch and Charlie Monroe. A number of songs on both albums have never been commercially recorded by Bill. The principal focus in my selection of this material was the change in Bill's self-presentation at live performances from the austere and laconic Master of Ceremonies of the fifties to the gracious and discursive raconteur of the sixties as the patriarch of bluegrass—in short, from angry young man to acknowledged master. Volume 2 of this set, *Bill Monroe and Doc Watson, Live Duet Recordings 1963–1980 Off The Record Volume 2* (SF 40064), is devoted entirely to live performances of Bill and Doc Watson recorded between May 1963 and September 1966, with an additional cut from the White House, 1980.

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## Some Thoughts About Live Performance and Jam Session Recordings

The idea of issuing an album of live performance and jam session material of Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys and Doc Watson sprang from the realization that many musical ideas came to instant fruition in the heat of performance. The best examples I can think of on this recording are "Blue Grass Stomp" and "Wayfaring Stranger," but there are many others. I've offered some suggestions for comparative listening, using the live performance next to the studio recording, but I leave to the listener the challenge of really penetrating the questions which will emerge through comparison.

In his earliest recordings, first with his brother Charlie on Bluebird and then on his own Victor and Columbia recordings up to 1950, Bill Monroe's vocal style had two dominant elements. He was capable of singing in a sweet, wistful timbre, which he rarely used after moving into the Decca years in the 1950s. Also, in the forties, both on the Opry recorded transcriptions and the repertoire available on some of the Columbia records, we hear the degree to which Monroe would draw on an element in his spirit which sounds like rage modified in an indescribable way. This transition is definitely perceptible from recordings that move from the fifties into the sixties. Finally in the sixties, we notice Monroe beginning to selectively adapt his voice

when he wishes to muster power, but no longer with the seemingly unlimited physical and tonal capacities characteristic of his earlier period. By then, he had developed fresh techniques for singing gently, though less sweetly, and dynamically, though less powerfully. He continues to develop means of retaining the musicality of his performance despite increasingly limited resources. This recording shows sides of Monroe which you cannot hear on any of his studio recordings and which anyone who loves his music deserves to enjoy.

## Bill Monroe and Doc Watson Thirty Years Ago

This set invites you to look back thirty years. At that time, a brilliant young guitar player, Arthel "Doc" Watson, was beginning to eke out a living as a folk singer on college campuses and in coffee houses. He supplemented this income by playing electric guitar as a sideman in a rockabilly band. Ironically, in this same period, Bill Monroe, after a quarter of a century as one of country music's leading lights, couldn't even get enough modestly remunerative dates to hold his band together. As the 1960-61 recordings of Watson indicate, he was every bit the artist then that he is now. As for Monroe, he was in his prime as a composer, vocal stylist, instrumental innovator, and the dominant creative force in the music which had come to be known as bluegrass. But Nashville's music-row booking agencies had no better strategy than to include Monroe as a novelty act on packaged tours featuring stars like Johnny Cash. Monroe was paid but a few hundred dollars a night. With increasing frequency, Bill was paid so little that he and one other musician would drive to the performance location and recruit local musicians for \$25.00 a day who could play Bill's standard repertoire from having heard his recordings.

While Watson and Monroe were experiencing these difficulties, "The Beverly Hillbillies" was

popular on television and Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs's "Ballad of Jed Clampett" was on the music charts. Flatt and Scruggs were under the astute management of Louise Scruggs and advised by Joan Baez's manager, Manny Greenhill. Sponsored by Martha White Flour and Columbia Records, they were in great demand for public appearances for which they received payments in the thousands of dollars a night. The Newport Folk Festival had started in 1959 and both the Stanley Brothers and Earl Scruggs were featured on the 1959 and 1960 extravaganzas. Monroe, by contrast, actually systematically refused interviews and even rejected Alan Lomax's invitation to appear at the Carnegie Hall "Folksong '59," a major review of American grassroots music. Monroe's rejection of the urban folk song revival helps explain the May 1962 cover story of *Sing Out!* magazine which proclaimed Earl Scruggs "the undisputed master of bluegrass music." The lead article was written by a well-known jazz critic and graduate student in folklore from UCLA.

The "folk song revival" was taking off with the appearance at the 1960 Newport Folk Festival of Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Later, Peter, Paul and Mary would appear. The popular-music-oriented entertainment industry was taking over the folk

song movement. It had no strategy for promoting a twenty-five-year veteran like Bill Monroe or helping a brilliant musician like Doc Watson to break into the world of performance and recording. One could only be challenged by the fact that a seasoned, brilliant veteran like Monroe and an astonishing entertainer/guitar virtuoso like Watson could not find record-company sponsorship or proper management in the early 1960s. As a result, their considerable talents could not be heard, neither could they be suitably remunerated.

From 1960, when I first met Tom Ashley and Doc Watson, through 1962, I made countless field trips to Appalachia to record an extensive repertoire of songs and stories from them, their neighbors and kin (available on Smithsonian/Folkways SF 40012 and the forthcoming 40029/30). This enabled me to place them in the context of important early recording artists I had heard on Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* (Folkways 2951, 2952, 2953). I considered Ashley and Watson to be on a par with the Carter Family and Uncle Dave Macon. My strategy for attracting an urban audience for Ashley and Watson had two parts. The first was to legitimize them by demonstrating the historic links and relationships between the two of them and musicians already acknowledged to be our nation's prime recording artists in their field. The second was to validate the "folkness" of their roots through detailed biograph-

ic notes and articles. The strategy was successful and attracted the attention of journalists such as *New York Times* folk music critic Robert Shelton, and others in similar positions. The only label willing to issue the Watson and Ashley field recordings was Folkways.

Through my participation as a member of the urban bluegrass trio, the Greenbriar Boys, then recording for Vanguard Records, I met Joan Baez and we were soon touring with her, developing contacts on college campuses across the nation. I had already joined with two colleagues in New York, John Cohen and Israel Young, to form the Friends of Old Time Music, a modest non-profit organization which produced concerts of traditional musicians in and around New York City. The Ashley, Watson, Howard, Price concert in the spring of 1961, and the February 1963 Bill Monroe concert both represented opportunities for these artists to be heard by New York folk song audiences. Through the Friends of Old Time Music I then booked the Ashley Group, Doc Watson (as a soloist), and legendary Hobart Smith and Almeda Riddle for other concerts and college folk festivals.

Building on my experience with Doc Watson, I thought it would be worth trying to bring Bill Monroe to this urban audience as well, if I could get through to him. Early in 1962, my insistence that the editor of *Sing Out!* magazine guarantee me a major cover story on Bill Monroe met with grudg-

ing approval. The truth was that Monroe had been inaccessible to Alan Lomax and, as Neil Rosenberg points out in his Bear Family 1959-69 notes, "Monroe's aversion to writers was such that he had threatened to break his mandolin over the head of a writer if he even mentioned Monroe's name in a book." The editor of *Sing Out!* thought we would never be able to get Monroe's agreement to the feature.

It took three months of negotiation, from June until August 1962, as well as the intervention of the Stanley Brothers, Mike Seeger, and (most important of all) Bill's bass player and companion of a quarter of a century, Bessie Lee Mauldin, to persuade Bill to comply with my request. Upon my arrival at the 1962 Galax fair, Bill avoided me assiduously, but Bessie reassured me. The inter-



view took place in a local bowling alley, sitting next to a blaring juke box. Bill's demeanor was a curious combination of unmistakable reluctance coupled with absolute commitment to keeping his word and telling the unvarnished truth. At the close of the interview, my last question to Bill was "Is there anything you said that you would not want to see in print?" He replied simply, "It's all true."

In writing the article for *Sing Out!* magazine I wanted to establish Monroe's centrality as the founder of and a continuing creative force in bluegrass. I was also interested in demonstrating Bill's folk roots through his family ties, his relationship with black fiddler and guitarist Arnold Schultz, and the influence of singing school church harmonies on the modal complexity of his highly personal vocal, instrumental, melodic, and harmonic styles.

In February 1963, at the opening night of the third annual University of Chicago Folk Festival, I gave Bill and Bessie the newly issued *Sing Out!* magazine with his picture on the cover. I also gave him the notes to the first Greenbriar Boys record, which explained why a group of urban folk singers was interpreting a classic like Monroe's "Raw Hide" when the original was still available. The Greenbriar Boys notes told the story of bluegrass, affirming Monroe's central role in it.

Bessie and Bill must have read this material overnight, because the first gesture Bill made the next morning when Mike Seeger and I met him for a

planning session was to level with us in a candid fashion, offering an account of how "pitiful" he had felt himself to be when he first visited the "Windy City" as a teenager with seriously afflicted vision. By sharing the sense of the fragility which he had learned to overcome, Bill established a new level of confidence with us. From that time forward, the curious distance, which bordered on hostility, never reappeared in my relationship with Bill, and I never sensed that he withheld any information when I posed questions to him.

Within a month or so we had worked out an agreement for me to move to Nashville and serve as a manager and booking agent in coordination with Jim Denny's artists agency and Decca Records. In May of 1963, Bill was booked to perform at the Ash Grove overlapping with Doc Watson. It was during that stay that I asked Bill if he would develop some repertoire that he and Doc could perform as duets. At the first rehearsal, Doc suggested starting with tunes that Charlie and Bill had recorded. After rehearsing two or three of these Bill suggested trying fresh repertoire that he had never performed or recorded with anyone else: "You Won't Be Satisfied That Way" and "Watson's Blues," for example. Bill made it clear that he was delighted to perform with Doc, but he wanted to make a distinction between the Monroe Brothers' sound and the Monroe/Watson sound. Nonetheless Bill was open to a thoroughly even exchange incor-

porating Doc's ideas and his own.

In the thirty years since the Ash Grove appearances, I always hoped for the possibility of recording Bill and Doc in the studio, but the weight of my responsibilities at the Smithsonian always intervened. In introducing their songs at the Ash Grove, Doc and Bill expressed both their delight with the opportunity to perform together and their mutual frustration with the lack of rehearsal time. These recordings, most of which I made myself, represent all of the repertoire which they featured in public performances between 1963 and 1980.

My interest in bringing Doc and Bill together as an occasional performing entity was also motivated by a desire to introduce Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys to Doc's emerging college and coffee house audience and to introduce Doc as a traditional musician to Bill's country music audiences. In 1963 Bill was introduced to the concert and coffee house circuit. With the advent of Carlton Haney's 1965 epic Bluegrass Festival and the many that sprang from it, Doc and Bill's festival performances increased sharply. The two-way strategy had worked.

## Bill Monroe—Notes on his Origins and Accomplishments

Born in Rosine, Kentucky, September 13, 1911, Bill Monroe was raised on an isolated family farm. His earliest musical influences derived from church and social traditions. When travelling singing teachers visited the area, the local churches participated in the regional tradition of "shape-note" singing schools. Hampered by poor vision from birth, Bill did not learn to read the music but developed a keen ear for the stark harmonies of this heritage. At home, Bill's mother sang ballads and folk songs and played both accordion and fiddle. Her brother, Bill's Uncle Pen, nurtured young Bill's musical inclination and helped him to overcome intense shyness by inviting him to accompany his fiddling at community dances and sharing the collection taken up for their pay. In these pre-teen years, Bill learned basic guitar and mandolin. He acknowledges, in addition to his Uncle Pen, the influence of a local African-American railroad worker, Arnold Schultz, who was both a fiddler and guitarist. According to Bill, Arnold "played the blues like no other man could."

Bill Monroe began his professional performing career in the early 1930s working with his brothers Charlie (guitar) and Birch (fiddle) in the mid-western towns around Chicago where they had settled in search of employment. By 1936,

Charlie and Bill were recording as The Monroe Brothers. Then, in 1938, Bill organized his own band, which became known as "The Blue Grass Boys." He soon made his debut on The Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, which served as his base from that time forward. His career and recording activity have been richly documented in print and on reissues (see discography and bibliography, below).

Monroe's significance as an artist may be evaluated partly in terms of his influence on musicians nationally and internationally. He had an impact in five distinct ways:

1. Through the media of radio, phonograph recordings, and live performance tours, Bill popularized his fresh synthesis of southern string band music, blues, sacred and country music so effectively that he literally created a genre which radio announcers came to call "bluegrass" after the name of his band. By eschewing electrification he created a space for an acoustic string band tradition to continue to grow and develop within the field of country music.
2. He developed and continued a distinct vocal tradition. From the outset, he opposed the crooning vocal styles characteristic of the commercial country music and pop music of the day preferring instead his "high, lonesome sound": ornamented vocals reminiscent of Appalachian ballad and church traditions.

3. He developed innovative techniques on the mandolin, establishing it as a virtuoso string band instrument.

4. He composed a diverse repertoire of sacred and secular songs and virtuoso instrumental tunes which have become standard fare amongst bluegrass, country, and some pop musicians.

5. His sensitive ear for what he terms "old tones" prompted him to preserve the modal characteristics of both the Anglo-Scots-Irish- and African-American folk tunes which he performed in his own arrangements and from which he borrowed in creating new compositions. More than any other musician of his time, he has skillfully infused country music with a substantial quotient of archaic tonal subtlety.

### Song Notes

Over the years, Bill established a routine format for his show dates. The opening theme song was the first portion of the fiddle tune "Watermelon On the Vine," first recorded by Charlie and Bill on June 21, 1936. Bill learned it from the fiddling of Clayton McMichen. In the early to mid-fifties, Bill established the closing which can be heard on track 19, the patter about Decca Records and the Opry, followed by a chorus of "Y'All Come," punctuated with an acrobatic mandolin finale. This recording follows a similar overall structure.

While it should be clear that this recording does not present any single performance set in its entirety, I attempted to include the categories generally covered by Monroe in any standard performance set:

1. Instrumental show pieces.
2. Monroe's solo vocals.
3. One or two spiritual songs (usually quartets).
4. A duet with the lead singer.

In addition to these four categories, when Bill had a competent lead singer he would usually feature him on a solo song. We have not presented these here in the interest of providing more of Monroe's own performances.

These recordings came from a variety of sources, listed below. The source used on the track is indicated in the notes to each song by the capital letter.

A. Jordan Hall, Boston, October 31, 1964: Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocals; Peter Rowan, guitar and vocal; Bill Keith, banjo; Tex Logan, fiddle; Everett Allen Lilly, bass.

B. Gaslight Cafe, New York City, May 4-6, 1966: Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocals; Peter Rowan, guitar and vocals; Lamar Grier, banjo; Richard Greene, fiddle; James Monroe, bass.

C. Ash Grove, Los Angeles, April-May 1963: Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocals; Del McCoury, guitar and vocal; Bill Keith, banjo; Kenny Baker, fiddle; Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass.

D. New River Ranch, Rising Sun, Maryland, September 23, 1956: Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocals; Edd Mayfield, guitar; Clarence "Tater" Tate, fiddle; Don Reno, banjo as noted, otherwise banjo and bass unknown.

E. Tex Logan's Home, New Jersey, June 17, 1965: Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocals; Peter Rowan, guitar and vocals; personnel varies with each selection noted for individual tracks.

F. Tex Logan's home, New Jersey, June 20, 1966: Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocals; personnel noted for each track.

G. New River Ranch, Rising Sun, Maryland, May 13, 1956: Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocals; Yates Green, guitar and lead vocals; Bobby Hicks and

Joe Stuart, fiddles; Rudy Lyle, banjo; Chick Stripling or Bessie Lee Mauldin, bass.

H. Fincastle, Virginia, September 5, 1965: details noted for each title.

1. National Mall, Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, July, 3, 1969

### 1956 Performances

1. Opening theme: **Watermelon Hanging on the Vine** (Source G)

2. **Roanoke** (Source G)

In the fifties, Bill frequently opened a set with an instrumental tune, a practice which gave way in the sixties to more frequent occasions when he and the lead singer would open with an up-tempo song immediately followed by the introduction of the full band and an opportunity for the lead singer to do his solo song for the set. Bill originally recorded this song on December 31, 1954. He claims that he named the song for the town because he was doing several dates in that area at the time. The version here is notable for the superb double fiddle work of Joe Stuart and Bobby Hicks.

3. **Brakeman's Blues** (Source D)

The first song Bill Monroe ever sang on the Grand Old Opry, the "Mule Skinner Blues," was rarely if

ever absent from his live performances. However, he recorded quite a few of Jimmie Rodger's yodelling songs, both with his brother Charlie and with the Blue Grass Boys. Rather than present yet another recording of "Mule Skinner," I selected "Brakeman's Blues." Sung here with extraordinary backup guitar by one of Bill's favorite sidemen, Edd Mayfield, this track demonstrates Bill's versatility and sense of innovation with yodelling techniques.

4. **Close By** (Source G)

This is one of Bill's most profound vocal and instrumental performances. It ranks with the finest of the cuts on his first LP, "Knee Deep in Bluegrass."

While the recording quality of this live performance cannot approach the brilliant instrumental definition achieved in the studio, the extraordinary quality of the fiddling supplemented by the other instruments in the group provides a rich, textured sound characteristic of Monroe's ensemble style.

In this inspired performance, we have an opportunity to observe many of the characteristics which account for Bill's unique domination as creator and master of his genre. (See Monroe's statement on singing in the "A Visit to Rosine," below) His singing exhibits a masterful control of the dynamic range of his vocal potential. Bill starts at an almost conversational volume in the first verse. He sharply increases the volume as he hits the high notes mid-verse, with an extraordinary power and trueness of

pitch. Then he punctuates the last line of the first verse, by providing us with an extremely spare closing mandolin tag. At the semi-cadence of the ensuing double-fiddle break, he strikingly increases the intensity of ensemble sound by changing his rhythmic mandolin chop to a syncopated rhythmic breakup. His singing on the second verse is characterized by his use of gentle falsetto on the high notes which elsewhere he sings with full power. The three-line mandolin break which follows is passionate, dramatic, and rock solid, interestingly enough leaving the fourth line for the fiddles to pick up, which they do in perfect time. After the third line of the fiddle break which follows the third verse, he plays an extended descending backup scale increasing the richness of the ensemble sound texture, although the actual notes of the mandolin run cannot be individually discerned, and he then turns to the rhythmic chopping again.

Two factors, identified in interviews with Monroe in the sixties, might explain the intensity of Monroe's vocal and instrumental performance here. The first is Bill's statement that he knew of no tenor fiddler who could equal Bobby Hicks. The inspirational quality of Monroe's vocal is thus a response to being moved by the extraordinary quality of the fiddling. Second, he stated "Sometimes, when you really want to put all your feeling in a song, you can pick out some girl that you

think mistreated you throughout life and have her in mind while you're singing the song. You'll really get the blues if you think she's fell for something and it wasn't much." Since this song deals with the loss of a loved one from her having "gone so far away," never returned, and died, it leads one to believe that Monroe used an equivalent of "method acting" to achieve the emotional intensity of this performance.

5. **Kentucky Waltz** (Source D)

This was one of Bill's most successful hit songs, beginning with its original release on Columbia Records (recorded February 13, 1945) and continuing with the Decca release (recorded March 17, 1951). The song has been a perennial favorite with bluegrass musicians and has been covered by a number of straight country singers. The version included here represents one of the most intense and lyrical examples of Monroe's relaxed singing style.

6. **Blue Grass Stomp** (Source D)

More than any other performance on this set, a comparison between the original recording on Columbia on October 22, 1949 (Mac Wiseman on guitar, Chubby Wise on fiddle, and Rudy Lyle on banjo) and the live performance included here reveals the astonishing degree to which Monroe could be strikingly innovative. Some of his sidemen have observed that when the intensity of the



band's performance was heightened by the addition of one or more highly competent sidemen, Monroe's sense of competition would be immediately apparent and fresh creative ideas sprang forth. Don Reno, who happened to be on the same program with Bill and the Blue Grass Boys (September 23, 1956), sat in as banjoist for this one tune. He played such a varied and dynamic solo that Bill, instinctively responding to the exuberance and jangling quality of the banjo, sought to retort with the most withdrawn, practically inaudible, modal counter-melody that he could muster. It was as if he wished to cast a different spell over the mood of the performance and he did it so successfully that the audience, somewhat awestruck, lightly applauded so as to show their appreciation without interrupting the magic of the moment. I had never before heard Monroe play that variation, but noticed that over the ensuing twenty or thirty years he has occasionally incorporated it when performing the tune.

#### 7. **Blue Moon of Kentucky** (Source G)

Many consider this song an old chestnut, but it is included here for two reasons: first, because Bill sings with unusual lyrical, yet dynamic, energy, possibly because he's responding to a request for the song from a friend in the audience. And second, because he incorporates some unusual staccato word rhythms in the speeded up portion of

the song, which add a measure of excitement to the poetic line at that point. While the Columbia version of the song (September 16, 1946, with Flatt and Scruggs) features Monroe's lyrical vocal style of his earlier years, the later Decca recording (September 4, 1954) is Monroe's energetic response to the fact that Elvis Presley chose this as one of the songs for his first recording session.

#### 8. **I'm Working On a Building** (Source G)

To quote Bill Monroe, "I believe that I heard the Carter Family sing that song, and we got requests for it on our show dates and I thought that I should learn it. It's a holiness number I would say. You know there's holiness singing in my music, bluegrass music.

"From the time you're a boy on you want to build something and when you get older, to think that you're working on the building like that, why, it gives you a wonderful feeling."

#### 9. **Angels Rock Me to Sleep** (Source G)

If you take the trouble to compare this live performance recording with the Decca studio recording (March 17, 1951) you'll find another excellent example of why we can benefit from the freedom that a performer feels before a live audience in contrast to the restrictive ambience which sometimes prevails in a studio under the heavy hand of an A&R man. In the Decca recording, the A&R man, Owen Bradley, decided to play the organ on

the session. Perhaps in an effort to reduce the stridency of the quartet style of the Blue Grass Boys, who had only a year earlier been signed with Decca, the group was encouraged to hum harmony in the background while the organ provided a continuo.

Liberated from these constraints in the live performance, Monroe sings a pungent tenor to the warm country vocal lead of Yates Green and the sonorous bass of Bobby Hicks. This produced an altogether pleasing result that is certainly more characteristic of Bill Monroe's aesthetic than of Bradley's.

#### 10. **Wheel Hoss** (Source G)

"Now there's a real wheel hoss," they would say back in Kentucky when Bill was a boy. By this, they meant one who knew his job and was right in there doing it. The term refers to the two horses, of a four-horse team, who are in the rear and who are responsible for the brunt of the actual work in breaking the inertia of a heavily-loaded wagon, as well as for maneuvering the turns. Once again, the Stuart/Hicks fiddles are very powerful.

### 1963–1966 Performances

#### 11. **Watermelon Hanging on the Vine**

(Source B)

This version of the theme is performed by Richard Greene playing solo fiddle, in contrast with the opening 1956 version so ably performed by Joe Stuart and Bobby Hicks.

#### 12. **Katy Hill** (Source A)

Bill's recollection is that he first heard "Katy Hill" from the playing of Clayton McMichen. It's Bill's contention that McMichen wrote "Katy Hill" off of the earlier and very similar fiddle tune known as "Sally Johnson." Tex Logan, from Coahoma, Howard County, Texas, learned to play the fiddle from his father starting at age 14. He had a brilliant career in electrical engineering while maintaining his friendships with fellow musicians Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper, Bill Monroe, and others. His special tuning for "Katy Hill" is GEBE.

#### 13. **True Life Blues** (Source C)

Bill enjoyed the benefits of numerous all-star bands during his half-century as leader of the Blue Grass Boys. The group assembled on this recording of the "True Life Blues" is clearly one such example. The interesting story about the origin of this early country song in support of women's issues is well documented in Mark A.

Humphrey's superb notes to "The Essential Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys 1945-1949" (see discography). The account provided by Humphrey is essentially the same as the one I collected in a taped interview in April 1977 with Pete Pyle and Bessie Lee Mauldin. But some interesting additional information arose in September 1991 when I took Pete out to Bill's farm for an afternoon visit. There Pete chided Bill for leaving out the fourth of the original five verses Pete had written. It is the verse which precedes "They'll go away and leave you at home, they'll never care if you're alone, they seem to forget they've got a wife, this story is sad, but it's true life." The preceding verse, according to Pyle, went "All through married life you'll find like this, a heart full of pain, it's a terrible mess, you got tear-dimmed eyes and a troubled mind, with a broken heart you're left behind."

#### 14. **I Live in the Past** (Source B)

Ironically, Bill Monroe introduced this song at the performance included here by saying it was written by a "little old lady" in Michigan. The author, Virginia Stauffer, is indeed from Michigan, but is probably at least twenty years Bill's junior and an old friend of his. The live performance included on this recording provides yet another example of the fresh vitality Monroe can bring to a song when freed of the constraints of the studio and A&R man. In the version recorded here, Monroe domi-

nates the rhythm with his mandolin chops and sings with vigor and intensity, whereas the studio recording features very soupy double fiddles and a slower tempo in a performance which renders the song entirely forgettable. An additional advantage of this live performance is that Bill indulges his affection for carrying on a dialogue with a highly competent lead instrumentalist in his band, in this case Richard Greene. The performance can be listened to as an ongoing dialogue between fiddle backup and vocal lead.

#### 15. **Wayfaring Stranger** (Source F)

Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocal; Peter Rowan, guitar and vocal; Richard Greene, fiddle. The studio recording of this song features an occasional humming in the background from the Blue Grass Boys with an opportunity for them to sing harmony only on the last line of the vocal refrain. Neil Rosenberg's discography indicates that Owen Bradley is again playing the organ, although I cannot hear it. Nevertheless, this is not an arrangement that one would have expected Bill Monroe to have suggested, but rather acceded to. In contrast, the live performance of "Wayfaring Stranger" provides, once again, an example of Monroe's sentient approach to incorporating the strengths of his best sidemen. One can only be struck by the similarity in vocal timbre and style between Bill and Peter Rowan on this cut. Moreover, Bill indulges his

taste for call and response phrasing between fiddle and mandolin on the final break of the song. The technique which Bill uses on the first break—brushing across all the strings—is one that I have never heard him use on any other song. But what is perhaps most striking about this performance is that it was sung in a small room, rather than in a concert hall or from an open-air stage. Monroe seems almost to be singing into one's ear with conviction and intimate intensity.

#### 16. **Fire on the Mountain** (Source B)

Bill called Tex out of the audience at the Gaslight the night this recording was made and with the fresh infusion of energy which Tex breathed into the whole ensemble, Bill was prompted to demonstrate his command of the Kentucky backstep, the sound of which can be heard on the resonant stage in the course of Tex's first break. Perhaps the most compelling feature of Monroe's first mandolin break is the ethereal, yet incomplete, modal wandering which provides a striking contrast to the rigor of the rest of his playing. In part B of the first mandolin break, Monroe begins an interesting modal foray, quickly abandons it, and returns to the main melody.

#### 17 & 18. **Blue Grass Breakdown** and **Raw Hide** (Source A)

During the period in 1963 when Bill Keith worked with the Blue Grass Boys, a number of extraordi-

nary studio recordings were made, but the most striking examples of Keith's innovative chromatic banjo style to have emerged from live performance experiences were never commercially recorded. Thus the inclusion of both "Blue Grass Breakdown" (originally recorded October 2, 1947, with Scruggs on banjo) and "Raw Hide" (originally recorded January 20, 1951, with Rudy Lyle on banjo) enables us to compare the intensity, originality and musical depth of Keith's approach with that of his more traditional predecessors.

#### 19. **Y'all Come** (Source A)

As noted earlier, Bill's closing speech about Decca Records, his years on the Opry and his final chorus and mandolin signature were, for more than a quarter of a century, his trademark at the end of a show.

## Mandolin Workshop at Fincastle, Virginia, and Barbecue Picking Party at Tex Logan's 1965–1966

### 20. Cotton-Eyed Joe (Source E)

Tex Logan, fiddle and vocal; Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocal; Peter Rowan, guitar; David Grisman, bass; Bill Keith, banjo; other unidentified backup musicians.

While I have heard Tex Logan play as a guest on many Bill Monroe performances, this recording of “Cotton-Eyed Joe” represents the first time I heard Bill both play and sing lead with Tex. I believe Tex learned the song from his father.

### 21. Get Up John (Source H)

Bill Monroe, mandolin; Peter Rowan, guitar. “I can still remember the tones and the lonesome stuff he would put into a tune,” says Bill of his Uncle Pen’s fiddling. This mandolin piece is based on “Sleepy John,” a fiddle tune which Bill learned from his Uncle Pen; and, in order to catch the spirit of the old-time fiddler, Bill retunes his mandolin to his version of the unusual fiddle tuning used by his uncle. The mandolin is tuned as follows: high or E strings are tuned down, one to D, the other to A (in unison with the A strings which, like the D strings, are not altered in pitch). The G strings are both changed: the first is raised one step to A, the other is lowered one half step to F#.

### 22. White House Blues (Source F)

“We got that off a record years ago...I don’t know whether Charlie brought that record back home when I was a kid.” Bill does not recall who recorded the version from which he learned the song, but it was Monroe’s recording of this, released shortly after it was recorded (January 25, 1954), that brought the tune into the contemporary bluegrass repertoire. Bill refers to his technique of handling the tune on mandolin breaks here as “a hot chorus...it’s not a hot chorus like a lot of mandolin players would play it. If they played it, it would really sound jazzed up...anything I’d play couldn’t sound nothing but bluegrass.” Because this was recorded in a jam session we cannot be certain of the personnel involved aside from Monroe, mandolin and vocal; Logan and Richard Greene, alternate fiddle parts; and Peter Rowan on guitar.

### 23. Roll in My Sweet Baby’s Arms (Source F)

At the Tex Logan picking parties which took place in 1965 and 1966, Bill revived his recollection of playing all-night dances with his Uncle Pen and Arnold Schultz. He kept the music going till sunrise, calling on different people in the room to join him in one or another favorite of his or theirs. We hear him invite Hazel Dickens to join him and need to understand that the paucity of applause following their duet is attributable to the fact that many in the audience had either fallen asleep or gone home.

My notes on the tape box indicate this number was recorded at 4:45 a.m. Amusingly enough, when they first started the song, they both sang tenor, realized the humor of that, and Bill deferred to Hazel’s tenor; not something he would do frequently with other singers.

### 24. Kansas City Railroad Blues (Source H)

Bill Monroe, mandolin; Peter Rowan, guitar. The original mid-twenties electrical recording was as a fiddle tune by G. Walburn and E. Hethcox on Okeh Records. About 1940, Byron Parker and his Mountaineers recorded essentially the same tune with Pappy Sherrill on fiddle and Snuffy Jenkins on banjo. This is a tune which Monroe has never recorded, but occasionally will perform from the stage. His ironic comment about Peter Rowan missing the earlier night’s rehearsal seemed to anticipate that he expected to lose Rowan in the chord progression, which he succeeded in doing.

### 25. The Walls of Time (Source H)

Originally recorded November 14, 1968, on Decca, Roland White was the lead singer with Monroe at the time. At the Tex Logan party where Monroe speaks the introduction used on this recording, Monroe was so taken with the song that he performed it twice during the evening. We retained the introduction for historic reasons, but the actual performance included here was drawn from the first Fincastle Bluegrass Festival three months later.

## Finale

Background Note: Carlton Haney’s Labor Day weekend Bluegrass Festival (September 1965) was the first weekend-long bluegrass festival and it launched a tradition. The idea sprang from a habit that Bill indulged in anytime he happened to be driving in the wee hours of the night within a few miles of Carlton’s home. Bill would direct the driver to the house, rap on the door himself, wake everybody up, and between three and five in the morning, Bill, with his full retinue, would swap ideas over breakfast. The conversation would always turn to Carlton’s favorite visionary projects. He was passionately committed to the concept of establishing a bluegrass festival that would take place over several days and would involve all the most significant bluegrass performers that had either travelled or recorded with Monroe. The festival would culminate with a production called the Bluegrass Story. His idea for a bluegrass university invariably met with no enthusiasm from Monroe, but he continued to bring it up nonetheless. After a half dozen pre-dawn discussions over a period of a year and a half or so, I suggested that Carlton come to the July 1965 Newport Folk Festival, which he did. Together we walked through the programs, workshops, and major performances and talked about production and planning issues. When the moment actually arrived to do the Fin-

castle, Virginia, Bluegrass Story the afternoon of September 5, 1965, Carlton and I collaborated on the program although we had no written outline. I had in my hands, about two hundred Decca recording session sheets which structured our cast and repertoire chronologically. In keeping one or two songs ahead of those on the stage with Bill, once we got “Mule Skinner Blues” off the ground, Carlton and I would huddle backstage, decide on the next group of performers that was available, select the suggested repertoire for them to perform with Bill and rush to notify them, leaving them three to five minutes to prepare for their moment on the stage with Bill Monroe. Carlton was eloquent and dedicated to creating a living review of history. He accomplished this with vitality, humor, and considerable historic poetic license.

#### 26. When He Reached Down His Hand For Me (Source H)

Bill Monroe, mandolin and tenor; Mac Wiseman, lead vocal and guitar; Don Reno, baritone; Benny Martin, bass.

In preparing this recording, every person with whom I spoke who had been at the first Fincastle Bluegrass Festival recalled this performance as being the emotional highlight of the weekend. It was one of the last songs of Carlton Haney’s initial presentation of the famous Bluegrass Story.

#### 27. Monroe Family Segment (Source I)

1. Paddy On the Turnpike
  2. How Old Are You My Pretty Little Miss?
  3. He Will Set Your Fields on Fire
  4. Durang’s Hornpipe
  5. I Know My Lord’s Gonna Lead Me Out
- Bill’s commitment to a multitude of family, philosophical, and musical reflections might emerge in all night conversations or in formally structured interviews, but it was clear in either case that he had a lot he wished to say, but was only willing or able to communicate it under certain circumstances. One such occasion was the 1969 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, when he agreed to join his brothers Charlie and Birch in some reminiscent exchange as a tribute to their father J.B. Monroe. The brief discussion and musical examples which constitute track 27 here represent a small portion of those sessions.

Birch plays two fiddle tunes here; the fiddling style is different on each. “Durang’s Hornpipe,” an Uncle Pen tune, is played as a lively dance tune; Birch uses a strong bowing arm—an insight into his interpretation of Uncle Pen’s style. But “How Old Are You?” is a Kentucky courting song—a favorite of his mother’s. Here the bowing is gentle, lilting and delicate. I include the verses here for the benefit of bluegrass musicians who may wish to incorporate this Monroe family tune in their repertoire.

How old are you my pretty little miss/ How old are you my honey?/ If I don’t die of a broken heart I’ll be sixteen next Sunday.

Can you court my pretty little miss/ And can you court wildflower?/ I can court more in a minute and a half than you can in one hour.

Will you marry me my pretty little miss, will you marry me good-looking?/ I’ll marry you but I won’t do your washing or your cooking.

Then I won’t marry you my pretty little miss/ No I won’t marry you my dear—o/ Who’s asking you to marry me you big, tow-headed scarecrow.

After each verse, the second part of the fiddle tune can be played instrumentally, or the familiar vocal refrain can be sung: Fly around around my pretty little miss/ Fly around my daisy/ You slighted me and you broke my heart/ And you almost drove me crazy.



JB Monroe  
Rosine Ky  
May 15 - 1915

### A Visit to Rosine and Other Observations

In late July 1963, Bill Monroe asked Del McCoury and me to accompany him on a trip from Nashville to Rosine, Kentucky. As agreed, we met Bill in the parking lot at Goodlettsville. We had difficulty finding him because, though he was standing nearby clad in baggy, bib overalls and a baseball cap, he looked nothing like the dapper Bill Monroe we were used to as a performer. In the back of his pickup truck were two hound dogs destined for his brother Charlie and two piglets for his brother Speed. On arriving in Rosine, we delivered the animals, and Charlie immediately insisted that they try out the dogs' ability to speak, taking us into the woods for a sojourn which lasted until the wee hours of the morning. There was no trace of the often over-emphasized animosity between them. Del and I were regaled with jokes and stories about the old days.

About three hours of sleep, Bill awakened Del and me, and following a quick breakfast with Charlie, Bill led us up the hill to his child-

hood home. As we approached it, he recounted the story of his returning to Rosine in his late teens for the first time after his initial departure and the pain he felt at seeing no light in the window of his old home. He stressed that this was the first time that he understood fully how alone he felt in the world and noted that this experience was the impetus for his writing the song "I'm On My Way to the Old Home." Monroe's mandolin solo on the magnificent February 3, 1950, Decca studio recording of this song, cries out of the wrenching pain of this experience.

On reaching the top of the hill where the house stood, Bill further explained that the path on which we were now standing was formerly the main road between Rosine and the next town. He recounted his practice of running and hiding in the barn when he saw strangers coming down the road, because he did not want to put up with the derision of those who found his crossed-eyes an opportunity for ridicule. He then took us down to the barn where we discovered that a trunk full of his father's papers, correspondence, and farm transaction logs had been scattered out across the floor. He expressed a combination of rage and despair at his brothers' lack of respect for their father's documents. We spent an hour gathering all the papers and replacing them in the trunk, which we then took back to Nashville. At my request, Bill gave me two of the numerous log books his father so

meticulously kept. He described his pride at the care and precision of his father's documentation and noted his sense of satisfaction that his family was both literate and highly competent in basic mathematics. The message that I derived from that experience with Bill was that his music was only one aspect of the deep commitment he felt to his family and regional culture.

For instance, Monroe has a deep and complex philosophy of music which he shared with me in a number of interviews conducted over several years. They are excerpted here:

"I was going to be sure through my life I played some blues, because I always loved it that well. I was going to play the blues in my way of playing them. I use stuff that I heard as a little boy and notes that just sunk in my mind and I kept. If you'll listen to my work you'll see that there's blues in it..."

"Singing the blues, there's not everybody that can sing them. There's people that can go through them, but they don't really put in there what's really there. The notes and things will work same as the words; they'll tell you lots of things, if you want to put yourself in there and be just thinking like the music goes."

"If you study music deep enough, old time music, why you get to learn what's good for it and what's not good for it. You just can't play it now and not pay any attention to it and do that. You've got to

be thinking about it, maybe when you're working doing other things; you've got to keep your mind on that music to really get deep in it. I think I've studied old time music deeper than anybody in the country. It all leads to where I know what was the foundation of a number in old time music. I know what's back there and you can get it out or you cannot get it out; but if it's not brought out, why I don't care nothing about really listening to it."

"And it's the same thing about a song... just to get in there and run through the words and not make them stand out. There's places in a song that some words should mean more than others and most times it's on the end of a line where they mean something. Just a voice that runs straight, that don't vary either way, why it doesn't do me any good. I like to hear up and down... what I mean I like to ease up, and then, you know, pick it back up here... you need some volume. And that's the kind of way with a fiddle piece or any kind of number. I like to break on any number if you'll get down and pick out the stuff that's really in that song."

Observations like these by Bill Monroe would emerge with unpredictable periodicity. If you were driving him a long distance at night and he was concerned about the driver staying awake, he would draw on his extensive body of philosophical thought and historical incident, recounting stories that he knew would keep you from falling asleep at the wheel. In contrast, on many occasions when the

Blue Grass Boys were on the road with Bill and Bessie, the 1958 station wagon, which had already travelled about 250,000 miles, was loaded with string bass, all the other instruments, six people and their baggage. Under these conditions, Bill could withdraw into a pensive silence that might last two or more days. He was never unpleasant or glum, one never knew if he was composing tunes or studying on the past or planning some aspect of his musical development, but not a word was spoken by Bill and consequently anyone else in the car. Occasionally Bill or Bessie would instruct the driver to pull into a gas station or restaurant. On entering the restaurant the band would take a table, Bill would either go to the telephone booth or the washroom and, on emerging would sit alone at a table at the opposite end of the room. The days of silence did create mild tension under the circumstances...particularly when days of travel were sparsely dotted with performances but the long distances required that we drive all night and never sleep in a bed for as many as three days at a stretch. Sometimes after a few days of silence, Bill would come up with a melody which he'd either sing or pick out on the mandolin. Sometimes he might have a refrain to go with it, or would ask the group in the car to help him set words to the refrain. He would then teach the vocal lead to his singer and they would rehearse the song without any verses as a means of honing it and establishing

it in memory. Thus, life on the road was fascinating, exhausting, and worth everything it took out of you.

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### Discography

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Bill Monroe recordings currently available on MCA:

*Bean Blossom* (MCA 8002), CD only

*Cryin' Holy Unto the Lord* (MCA 10017), CD & cassette

*CMA Hall of Fame* (MCA 10082), CD & cassette

*Kentucky Bluegrass* (MCA 136), cassette only

*CMA Hall of Fame* (MCA 140—different from MCA 10082), cassette only

*Live at the Opry* (MCA 42786), CD & cassette

### Videorecordings

Available from Smithsonian/Folkways Mail Order, 414 Hungerford Drive, Suite 444, Rockville, MD 20850.

*The Mandolin of Bill Monroe: Vol. 1 & 2* (Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings and Homespun Video VD-MON-MN01 & VD-MON-MN02) video

*Doc's Guitar: Fingerpicking & Flatpicking* (Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings and Homespun Video VD-DOC-GT01) video

### About the Compiler

Ralph Rinzler began doing fieldwork in the mid-1950s for Folkways Records. He joined the Greenbriar Boys in 1959. From 1960 on he worked closely with musicians he had encountered in Appalachia: Clarence Ashley and Doc Watson. This experience led him to develop a strategy for bringing important traditional musicians into the "folk song revival" by serving as their business representative and documentarian. As Monroe's manager and agent in the mid-1960s he used what he learned from working with Ashley and Watson to bring Bill Monroe's music to an urban audience. In 1963 he became Field Programs Director for the Newport Folk Foundation, and in 1967 became founder and Director of the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife. In 1983, in his capacity as Smithsonian Assistant Secretary for Public Service, Rinzler began a three and a half year negotiation with the founder of Folkways Records, Moses Asch. Consistent with the Institution's mandate for the increase and diffusion of knowledge, the acquisition of Folkways added to the Smithsonian's scope a new dimension, that of a museum of world sound. He currently serves as Assistant Secretary Emeritus.

## Credits

Executive producer, compiler and annotator:  
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Archival tape source assistance:  
Smithsonian/Folkways Archivist Jeff Place, Eugene Earle, Sandy Rothman, Peter Feldman, Alice Gerrard, Pete Kuykendall, Ed Kahn, David Grisman, Mike Casey, Southern Folklife Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

## Recording Information

1956 tapes recorded by Jeremy Foster and Alice Gerrard  
1960s material—Ralph Rinzler, assisted by colleagues no longer identifiable after 30 years  
Monroe Brothers recorded by Smithsonian Institution  
Typing and editorial assistance: Kate Rinzler, Andrew Shahriari, and Michael Schall  
Digital editing by David Glasser, Airshow assisted by Lea Anne Sonnenstein

Analog to digital transfers of 1956 Gerrard collection by Steve Gronback, TGS Studios, Chapel Hill, NC  
Mastered by Alan Yoshida, A&M Mastering, Hollywood, CA  
Cover photo: David Gahr  
Design by Visual Dialogue  
Bill Monroe appears here courtesy of MCA Records

## Photo Credits

*cover*: left to right, Billie Baker, fiddle; Bill Monroe; Del McCoury, guitar; Newport Folk Festival, July 26, 1963, photo by David Gahr  
*page 1*: Bill Monroe handbill, February 1963  
*page 5*: Bill Monroe, mid-1960s; photo by Phil Zimmerman  
*page 19*: left to right, Bill Monroe, Alice Gerrard, Birch Monroe, Charlie Monroe, Mike Seeger, Ralph Rinzler, Smithsonian Institution Festival of American Folklife, 1969  
*page 20*: signature of J. B. Monroe in account book of his farm, May 1915

## About Smithsonian/Folkways

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch and Marian Distler in 1947 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are now available on high-quality audio cassettes, each packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes, recordings to accompany published books, and a variety of other educational projects.

The Smithsonian/Folkways, Folkways, Cook, and Paredon record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies. They are one of the means through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

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