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**The Inland Northwest
Bluegrass Music
Association**

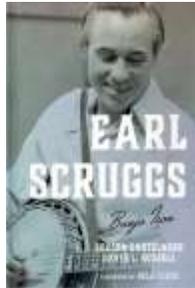
The Bluegrass Blabber



Reviews 'n' Stuff

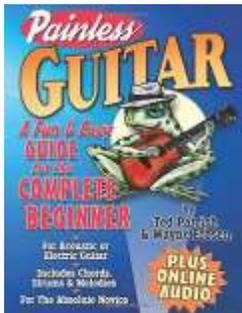
By Mitch Finley

Book: Nonfiction/Biography



Gordon Castelnero and David L. Russell, *Earl Scruggs: Banjo Icon* (rowman.com). The first significant biography of Earl Scruggs published since his death in 2012, it's competently written. Using a "this happened, then this happened, and next this happened" style, the authors left this reader hankering for a more literary biography of Earl Scruggs, one that would whistle up something of the man's genius, courage, humility and beautiful spirit. Until someone writes that book, however, this one will at least provide the basic story of the life of Earl Scruggs.

Instructional Book



Ted Parrish & Wayne Erbsen, *Painless Guitar* (nativeground.com). Subtitled "A Fun & Easy Guide for the Complete Beginner," you get all the basics from "Tuning the Guitar" to "Picking With a Pick," and from "Playing the Melody" to "Simple Scales." The thirty songs you'll learn are organized according to "Key of D," "Key of G," "Key of C" and "Key of Am." Included are a bunch of good'ns, such as

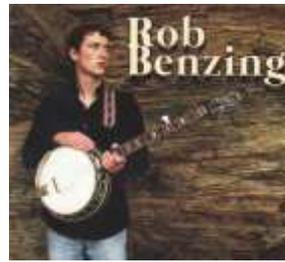
"Buffalo Gals," "Wabash Cannonball," "Old Joe Clark," and "Banks of the Ohio." Ideal for the "complete beginner."

Music CDs



Andrew Vogts, *Sasquatch With an Alien On Its Head* (pxrec.com). Well now, this is something entirely different! Fifteen-year-old Delaware fiddler Vogts—with his band, The Psycho Exploding Orangutans—gonna knock your socks completely off! Influenced by the likes of

Bruce Molsky, Mark O'Connor, former Crooked Still wild man cellist Rushad Eggleston, Darrel Anger, Victor Furta-do, and others, Vogts runs—and I do mean *runs*—through eleven original and traditional tunes. These include a creative take on Jay Ungar's "Ashokan Farewell," "Sadie At the Back Door," by Seattle's Jere Canote, and the title tune, "Sasquatch . . ." etc., one of the several here that Vogts wrote himself. Lovers of fiddle music, do not—do not—miss this one!



Rob Benzing, *Rob Benzing* (pxrec.com). Young Maryland banjo-picker Benzing is going to blow you away with the 13 songs and tunes on this CD. Pretty much a straight-ahead bluegrass music man, he includes here a passle of familiars including Earl Scruggs' "Lonesome Road Blues" and Pete Wernick's, "Armadillo Breakdown." Joining Benzing are crack bluegrass instrumentalists and singers who definitely know what they're doing. This is a major whiz-bang of an album! Get you one.



Hammertowne, *Hillbilly Heroes* (mountainfever.com). This album gives you and even dozen songs and tunes if the traditional bluegrass music mold. Based in Kentucky, these five guys know exactly what they're doing. Eschewing any traditional material, the band wails on songs, and one instrumental, that belongs in the contemporary bluegrass music genre including one by Del McCoury, "I'm Lonely For My Only." Yowza!

Lonesome River Band, *Mayhayley's House*



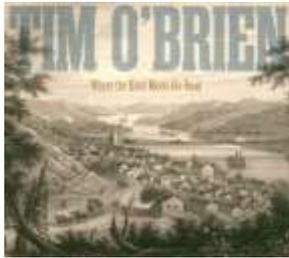
(mountainhomemusiccompany.com). Led by banjoist Sammy Shelor, Lonesome River Band is one of the A-List bluegrass bands performing today, and this CD will not disappoint. This is the band's bluegrass tribute to an early 1920s Virginia band called Dad Blackard's Moonshiners. The

title of the album refers to one Mayhayley Lancaster, to quote the publicity sheet, "a self-proclaimed 'Oracle of the Ages' who handed out 'readings' and personal predictions at her home in southwest Georgia's Heard County." This is lovely stuff, folks. Give 'er a listen.



The Osborne Brothers, *Once More Vols. I & II* (rounder.com). What you won't find among the 24 songs on this CD is "Rocky Top," probably the biggest hit the living-legend Osbornes ever had. So it goes. What you do get is 24 excellent Osborne Brothers songs that showcase the brothers' great voices and artistic instrumen-

tals, Bobby on mandolin and Sonny on banjo. Gonna like it a bunch, yessir!



Tim O'Brien, *Where the River Meets the Road* (timobrien.net). There's just no getting tired of listening to Tim O'Brien sing and play. This latest album draws inspiration from the musical heritage of O'Brien's home state of West Virginia. Joining in on this CD's twelve cuts are Stuart Duncan, Kathy Mattea, Mollie O'Brien, Noam Pikelny, Chris Stapleton, and Bryan Sutton. Not a single clinker here, but I really like Tim's rendition of "Little Annie." Lovely!



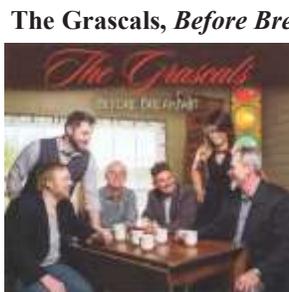
Julian Lage and Chris Eldridge, *Mount Royal* (freedirt.net). Two of today's most talented acoustic guitarists pick a good dozen tunes and songs. Lots of original material that's given the hot treatment. Also, some gentle tunes. The treatment the two guitarists give Don Stover's "Things In Life" is

special, however, and you're likely to return to it again and again. Wonderful, too, are the duo's renditions of Eddie Vedder's "Sleeping By Myself" and John Hartford's "Living In the Mississippi Valley." Anyone who loves the sounds of acoustic guitar will love this one.



Eddie Adcock, *Vintage Banjo Jam* (pxrec.com). Round about 1963, Country Gentlemen founding banjoist Eddie Adcock recorded his (to date) only solo album. Intended to be a demo collection, before long the original tapes wound up on a shelf or in a trunk where they were ignored for fifty-some-odd years.

Recently roused out of their slumber, they became this CD, a great witness to the knock-your-socks-off talent of Eddie Adcock. What remarkable tunes and what a remarkable talent! Among the 13 cuts are originals such as "Downtown Boggie," "Warm and Windy," "Eddie To the Rescue," and "Virginia Bluebell." Backing up are Tom Gray (bass), Pete Kuykendall (rhythm guitar) and Barry Worrell (drums). Don't miss this terrific collection of banjo performances!



The Grascals, *Before Breakfast* - mountainhomemusiccompany.com. The Grascals just cannot be beaten, that's what. This, their latest CD, once again proves the truth of this assertion. Personally, I miss the voice of Jamie Johnson—who departed the group in 2015—but new Grascal John Bryan ably takes up the slack, and the Grascals' powerful treatment of a song

remains, both exciting and entertaining. Enjoy this one!

Fireball Mail, *Bending the Rails* (fireballmailband.com). First off, no, you will not find "Fireball Mail" performed on this CD. Sorry 'bout that. You will, however, find ten excellent songs, mostly written by band members. One song, by Brad Bulla, is "The Dark Night of the Soul," and one wonders if Bulla knows that this descriptive phrase was coined by a 16th century Spanish Catholic saint and mystic, John of the Cross. Anyway, it's a song Bulla wrote following the death of his 17-year-old son, Jed, a national champion fiddler, killed by a drunk driver. It's a touching song, too, worthy of your attention.

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