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*The Father Of
Bluegrass*

*Bill Monroe
& The
Bluegrass Boys*

- In Memoriam -

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Mule Skinner Blues
Blue Moon Of Kentucky
Uncle Pen ... and more

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Bill Monroe & The Bluegrass Boys

*The Father Of
Bluegrass*

AIM 3006 CD

1. Orange Blossom Special
2. Uncle Pen
3. Footprints In The Snow
4. Bluegrass Breakdown
5. I Saw The Light
6. Shady Grove
7. Shenandoah Breakdown
8. Mule Skinner Blues
9. Prison Song
10. Blue Moon Of Kentucky
11. Can't You Hear Me Calling
12. Nine Pound Hammer

Bill Monroe is recognized as an American genius - he is the father of Bluegrass music, having invented the style, the name, and for over sixty years was its greatest ambassador. Bluegrass music is a hard-edged style of country music, that emphasises instrumental virtuosity, close vocal harmonies and a fast, driving tempo. The musical genre took its name from the Bluegrass Boys, and Bill Monroe's music forever has defined the sound of classical Bluegrass - a five-piece acoustic string band, playing precisely and rapidly, switching solos and singing in a plaintive, high lonesome voice.

He was born in Rosine, Kentucky on September 13, 1911 and died on September 9, 1995. His mother died when he was ten years old, and not long after his father passed away and he went to live with his Uncle Pen, a locally renowned fiddler, with whom he would ride on horseback to play at remote square dances. It was during this time that Monroe met black Blues musician Arnold Schultz, who was to become a major influence on his playing style. His brothers, Birch (fiddle) and Charlie (guitar) had moved to Chicago to find work, and at age 18, in 1929, he joined them. The brothers played regularly on a Gary, Indiana radio station, Birch left the band after a while, and Bill and Charlie continued as the Monroe Brothers, playing throughout the South and Midwest and recording some 60 songs for Victor's Bluebird label.

Bill formed the Kentuckians and headed for Arkansas, he then moved to Atlanta, and after changing members called his band the Bluegrass Boys. He auditioned for the Grand Ole Opry in 1939, and after having been selected, the first song he performed was "Mule Skinner Blues." It was a performance that made his career, as well establishing the new genre of Bluegrass.

It was during the war years that he became a favourite on the Opry, developed his style, featuring his high, piercing tenor voice and driving mandolin, toured the South continuously and with the addition in 1944 of the revolutionary musicians guitarist Lester Flatt and banjoist Earl Scruggs to his lineup of fiddler Chubby Wise and bassist Howard Watts formed what many have called "the world's greatest Bluegrass band."

Monroe's music really took off with this band, and they recorded the classic "Blue Moon Of Kentucky." This band was one of the most popular in Country music, and they would perform on tour in a large circus tent.

In the 60's his career received a great boost from the Folk musical revival, and playing festivals, often in the North for the first time, became a way of life. In 1970 Bill Monroe was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame, in 1988 he received a Grammy for "Best Bluegrass Recording" and in 1993 he was the charter inductee in the Bluegrass Hall of Fame. Also in 1993 he was presented with the Grammy's "Lifetime Achievement Award."

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