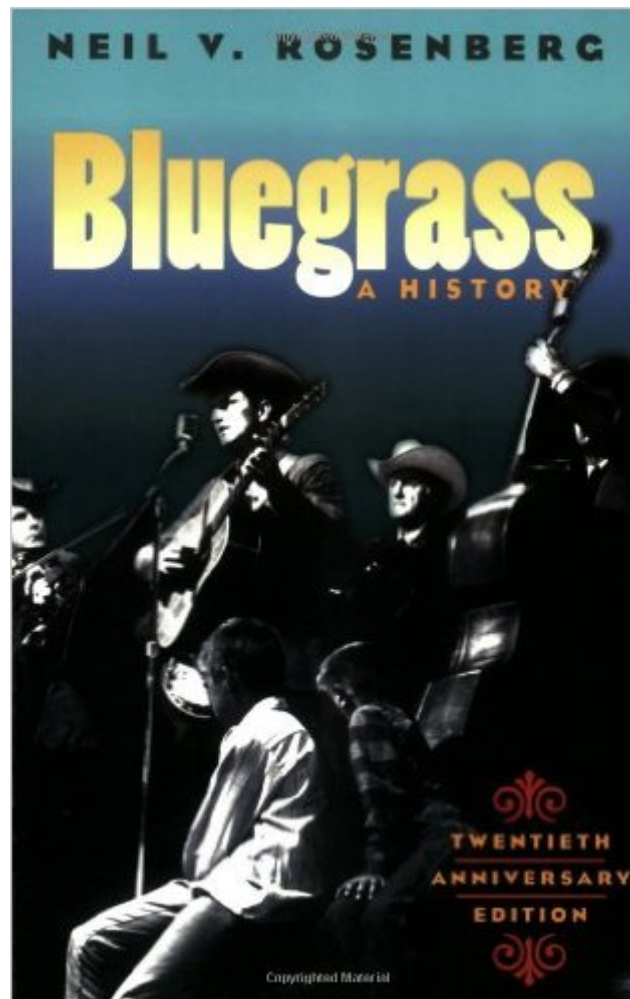


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Bluegrass: A HISTORY 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION (Music In American Life)



Synopsis

Beginning with the musical cultures of the American South in the 1920s and 1930s, this title traces the genre through its pivotal developments during the era of Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys in the forties. It also describes early bluegrass' role in postwar country music, and its trials following the appearance of rock and roll.

Book Information

Series: Music in American Life

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (19 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Bluegrass music's greatest practitioners have always been plain-as-burlap folks who wouldn't give a hoot about dissecting and intellectualizing the music that pops out of them as naturally as sweat. As an appreciator of real deals, I wouldn't have it any other way. However, I'm glad that folklorist/musical historian Neil V. Rosenberg has been around for several decades now, poking his scholarly nose into the fascinating haystack that is bluegrass and putting the needles into cultural perspective. This sweeping and heartfelt book, Rosenberg's crowning achievement as the planet's foremost bluegrass oracle, will stand as the last word on the subject for a long, long spell. Unlike rock 'n' roll, whose Big Bang genesis one fateful day in Memphis reverberated like a sonic boom, bluegrass had more fitful beginnings. The music's raw ingredients had been fermenting in Appalachia for untold years in the form of homemade "hillbilly" music before a shy Kentuckian named Bill Monroe began distilling them in the 1930s into a distinctive musical form. Monroe deliberately crafted the sound and personality of bluegrass and, much more round-aboutly, gave it

its name. As the central figure in bluegrass, Monroe's patriarchal spirit looms magnificently large over Rosenberg's history, which, after all, is ultimately Monroe's story. Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, arguably the next most important innovators in bluegrass, also figure prominently. In the 1940s, the two had been underpaid sidemen in Monroe's Blue Grass Boys band before abruptly striking out on their own in 1948 and becoming Monroe's main competition. Heavy turnover was a fact of life with the Blue Grass Boys, but the mercurial Monroe was outraged by the pair's defection and didn't speak to them for over twenty years.

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