
Reviewed by Bill Revill

Lester Flatt has been playing professionally for nearly forty years, and this album of twelve songs tries to act as a retrospect on his career. Backed by his band the Nashville Grass, Flatt runs over some of the numbers he used to do with Earl and the Foggy Mountain Boys. The performances are credible, the band is in excellent form (especially Marty Stuart on guitar), and Lester is in fine voice.

It is not an outstanding album, except perhaps for the fact that it serves as a review of the career of one of the most important names in bluegrass. Lester Flatt has been around since the beginning of bluegrass, coming into the spotlight in 1944 when he joined Bill Monroe's organization. From 1948 to 1969, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs were the paramount bluegrass band in the country. Since the breakup, Flatt has retained most of the Foggy Mountain Boys, added a couple of members, and continues to play bluegrass.

The choice of material centers mostly on old Flatt and Scruggs material ("Come Back Darling," "Down the Road," "A Hundred Years from Now," "My Cabin in Caroline," "Foggy Mountain Chimes," etc.) and some other songs of historical interest, e.g., "The Wreck of the Old 97," the first song Flatt learned, and "I'm Gonna Sleep with One Eye Open," a song that was banned from WSM.

The liner notes offer a fairly detailed biography of Lester Flatt, and the history that his manager outlines is invaluable to any bluegrass devotee. Again though, credit should be given to the instrumentalists. The band members are all listed, but it is difficult to tell which guitarist and which mandolin player is doing what.

If not the father of bluegrass, Lester Flatt is at least an uncle or cousin, and this album attests to his durability.


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Kicking Mule records is a small, California-based company, dedicated to producing guitar records. Peter Finger has put together an album of 16 tunes exploring the bottleneck guitar, and proves that he can play the instrument. Competence in playing, however, does not imply a competence in composing, and most of these tunes are redundant and the kind of things you'd expect to hear a