

# CLEAR FORK BLUEGRASS QUARTET

## Complete Bio

Bill Monroe is considered by many to be the Father of Bluegrass music. In 1945 he forged this new sound by combining the musical influences of his youth with strong performance skills and was ably accompanied by some of the best musicians of the day. Bluegrass music combines the drive and melodies of Celtic fiddle tunes as played in the Appalachian mountains, African-American Blues, and Baptist gospel harmonies. Monroe wrote many of his own songs, and often the themes were of home, leaving home, love, and family. Since its inception, Bluegrass music has spread all over the world. Bands from the US, Japan, and Europe come to Owensboro, KY to perform at the International Bluegrass Music Association's yearly convention. There is a Bluegrass Music Museum and even a Grammy award for best Bluegrass recording.

**CLEAR FORK BLUEGRASS QUARTET** knows, understands, and loves the sound that Bill Monroe came up with more than fifty years ago. As well as classic Bluegrass, they draw on other styles of traditional American music to shape their own. In concert, you'll hear elements and repertoire drawn from early country music stars including The Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers, and Western Swing, Gospel, Blues, fiddle music, and even polkas all have an influence on **CLEAR FORK BLUEGRASS QUARTET's** live and recorded sound.

Founded in 1984 by Paul Kovac, **CLEAR FORK BLUEGRASS QUARTET** has backed up legendary musicians Chubby Wise and Mac Wiseman. Kovac, who has performed on banjo with Bill Monroe, sings, plays guitar and mandolin, has fun as the band's MC, and is also the quartet's business manager. The banjo duties are superbly handled by Jim Metz, whose playing is clean and hard-driving. Jim has a clear, bona-fide tenor voice and blends well with Kovac. Bill Watson is a rock-solid acoustic bass player. He is adept at playing all American roots music styles, and his playing often spurs creativity from the rest of the band. When you hear Ray Sponaugle play, you hear more than 40 years of experience, of listening, of learning, of jamming, and of great fiddling. Ray talks with excitement of playing on television with Don Reno and Red Smiley in the early 1960s and plays today with that same emotion. Ray was awarded a 2006 Ohio Heritage Fellowship Award in recognition of his significant contribution to the traditional arts in Ohio.

Based on Northeast Ohio, **CLEAR FORK BLUEGRASS QUARTET** is represented by Great Lakes Performing Artist Associates of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and receives funding from the OHIO ARTS COUNCIL to present traditional arts throughout the state.

Updated Jun-09

**GREAT LAKES PERFORMING ARTIST ASSOCIATES**

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